

**THE AFFECTS OF RACE:  
MILLENNIAL MIXED RACE IDENTITY IN THE UNITED STATES**

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## **Abstract**

At the turn of the millennium, there has been a particular emergence of mixed race discourse in the United States concentrated on identity. While there has been a significant amount of criticism regarding Millennial Mixed Race Identities, there has been less attention given to the continued investments in these identities well into the new millennium. This dissertation implements Affect Theory as a means to better understand not only the development of the Mixed Race Identity Movement at the end of the twentieth century and the persistent desire for these types of identifications in the new millennium, but also as a means to reformulate mixed race identification to avoid complicity in structures of white supremacy and colonialism.

A perspective of affect allows a more thorough understanding of how mixed race identities have been heavily influenced by the affective attachments to the people we surround ourselves with; the affective responses to our past experiences of race and racial encounter; the affective relief developed to combat past affective experiences; and the racial affects that continually circulate within a racialized society and attach to differently raced bodies during moments of encounter. Specifically looking at some of the major texts of the Mixed Race Identity Movement underscores the way in which affect heavily influences understandings of identity and the problems that arise from seeking out the state to solve affective conditions. Continuing with a more precise Millennial Mixed Race Identity, Hapa, this dissertation examines the continued investments in these more specific identities and what a politics of recognition based on affect can problematically produce or uphold. Lastly, this dissertation implements Affect Theory in an attempt to refocus mixed race identity formation as an iterative and recursive process shaped through the constant contact with other bodies, other spaces, and other times. Yet, unfortunately, despite the ways in which affect produces alternative perspectives on the

development and investment in Millennial Mixed Race Identity, this perspective does not salvage mixed race discourse from being complicit in structures of colonialism or white supremacy in the new millennium.

## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	
AFFECTING CRITICAL MIXED RACE STUDIES	1
CHAPTER 1	
AFFECTIVE ASPIRATIONS: THE ROLE OF AFFECT AND STATE-SPONSORED RECOGNITION WITHIN THE MIXED RACE IDENTITY MOVEMENT	44
CHAPTER 2	
AFFECTIVE OPERATIONS: AFFECT, RECOGNITION, AND HAPA IDENTITY IN THE POSTMILLENNIAL UNITED STATES	90
CHAPTER 3	
AFFECTIVE REVELATIONS: RACIAL AFFECT AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ENCOUNTER	134
CONCLUSION	
AFFECTIVE REORIENTATIONS: RETHINKING MILLENNIAL MIXED RACE IDENTITIES IN THE POST-MILLENNIUM	176
BIBLIOGRAPHY	182

## Introduction: Affecting Critical Mixed Race Studies

When I was growing up the license plate on my mom's Dodge minivan read: R3HAPAS. My mom explained to my sister, brother, and me that a *Hapa* was someone like us—mixed race. Although my mom's explanation of what *Hapa* meant implied that there were other people in the world like me, when I looked around me in the predominately white and Jewish part of Los Angeles where I grew up there weren't any other children who looked like me or families that resembled mine.

When I was seven years old, I came home from Hebrew school crying because one of the other kids had pulled his eyes into slits chanting “Ching chong” as I walked by. He laughed and told me that I wasn't really Jewish because I had “slanty” eyes and dark skin and didn't look like any of the other Jewish kids at school. Not long after, I went with my mom to a Japanese Obon Festival to listen to folk songs and participate in traditional Japanese dances. I was so excited because we got to wear our kimonos with the big obo sashes around our waists and the little cherry blossom flower clips in our hair. When we arrived, I went over to a group of kids who were lined up to dance. They giggled as I approached and asked me if I was really Japanese. When I just stared at them, they giggled more and told me that I couldn't be Japanese because I looked so white. I walked back to my mom and cried.

These memories are seared into my mind because they made me *feel* different. In each instance, I perceived that I was asked to assert my ethnic/racial<sup>1</sup> identity and then told that

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<sup>1</sup> I do not mean to conflate the terms race and ethnicity. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I will be using racial identity in instances where it may seem to be more a question of ethnicity because in relation to Millennial Mixed Race Identity there is often a slippage between these two terms stemming from the establishment of the Office of Management and

particular identity did not really belong to me. As a child I was confused because I believed I was receiving different messages at home and in the outside world. In public spaces, I was interrogated about my racial identity with common questions like, “What are you?” or “Where are you from?” Over the years, I had various answers: hapa, mixed race, multiracial, half-Japanese and half-Caucasian, Eurasian, Jewish, my mother is Japanese and my father is white and Jewish. No matter what my answers have been, I have been met with responses such as, “But, you don’t look Japanese” or “Which of your parents is white?” Other comments have been: “But, were you raised Jewish?” or “I knew there was something different about you.” With each of these reactions, I felt increasingly isolated and unusual. By contrast, within the private space of my home, being racially mixed was not only unquestioned but also naturalized by not being discussed at all. I knew my parents did not look the same, their skin colors were different, and they were raised in different cultures and practiced different traditions. In our house, these cultural traditions were melded together seamlessly. We ate sticky rice with our brisket. We lit Hanukkah candles around the Christmas tree.

In an attempt to combat the feelings of difference we experienced in the world around us, my mom’s license plate—and the identity it named—was a way in which my family attempted to make public that which was already unquestioned in private. When I was younger, identifying as *Hapa* gave me a sense of belonging and a sense of wholeness that I didn’t feel in the world around me; it offered me shelter, something “identifiable” and nameable, to combat the questions about my identity.

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Budget’s ethno-racial pentagon in its Directive 15 (which will be discussed in further detail later).

Thinking back to the text of the plate, I see now that the letters—the possessive “R”—were more about my parents than they were about my siblings or me. For my parents, an interracial couple whose own parents refused to attend their wedding, *Hapa* was a term of empowerment, pride, and creation—it embodied their family. Upon first glance, my siblings and I do not look like each other. I do not particularly look like my father or my mother. I notice people staring at me when I walk with my father trying to make sense of a white man and a young ambiguous woman. *Hapa* gave my parents a way to make visible the kinship that may not have been readily identifiable to outside eyes. *Hapa* gave them and me a way to reconcile all these feelings of difference.

Recently, I asked my paternal aunt why my parents got together in the first place. Her response was shocking: “Well, your dad always had a thing for Asian women.” Once I was able to get over my initial offense, I realized that I am not that child in the minivan any longer sheltered by the supposedly harmonious identification of *Hapa*. The power dynamics of race are at play sometimes even in our most intimate relationships. Just because my parents participate in an interracial relationship does not make either one of them nor the family that they created automatically antiracist. Both of these individuals have carried with them their own beliefs about and experiences with race; each of them have brought these beliefs and experiences with them into the set of continual encounters that has made up their relationship; and these beliefs and experiences of race have not only shaped their experience in the racial world but also my own.

This story about the license plate is more than just a reminiscence of my childhood; it raises some of the major concerns that began this dissertation: how are formations of mixed race identity interconnected to feelings of kinship? How do our affective attachments to those we are



closest to influence our identity formations? How do our past experiences and our past feelings act as driving forces in our racial/ethnic identifications? How does affect work to both destabilize and reinforce the biological understandings of race and heterosexuality that haunt our contemporary notions of identity? Are there possibilities that attention to affect holds for a more nuanced understanding of identity formation?

My intention at the outset of this project was to reconcile mixed race identity with some of its major criticisms that I came to understand when I moved to Hawaii and began my graduate work. Before starting the University of Hawai'i, I had been living in Boston where I was constantly confronted with questions about my racial identity. Looking back, growing up in an all-white and Jewish area of Los Angeles and living in Boston, a racially segregated city, in my mid-20s played a significant role in making my racial identity a substantial factor in my consciousness. During those times, I identified strongly with mixed race. In fact, part of the initial reason that I came to the University of Hawai'i was to study mixed race in a place where racial mixing was not as uncommon as I had thought it was in the other spaces that I had inhabited. I had hoped then to expand the way that I understood mixed race identity and mixed race discourse, but I did not think that I would come to abandon a mixed race identification or that a mixed race identity would lose significance for me. I sit here now almost a decade later in my mid-30s having moved back to a very different Los Angeles than the one in which I grew up and having been changed by my experiences here in Hawaii and my time writing this dissertation. Mixed race is no longer my primary identification. I know that writing this dissertation has in many ways undone that identification for me, unraveled it and shown its weaknesses to me.

Throughout the course of writing this dissertation, there has been a fracture within the community of academics working on mixed race discourse that represents both the intentions I had at the outset and the conclusions I made in the end of my dissertation. On the one hand, there are many people who still want to identify as mixed race and see mixed race identity as holding value for deconstructing race through its troubling of racial categories. On the other hand, there are a number of scholars who have critiqued mixed race identity for the ways in which it perpetuates various structures of domination. When I began this dissertation, I was not ready to give up on mixed race identity completely because I still identified that way and that identity had been so important to me. Being in Hawai‘i had already significantly changed the way that I saw mixed race, specifically through my exposure to postcolonial theories and settler colonialism. I understood at the beginning of this dissertation that mixed race identity had been used in the projects of racial domination at various points in history to take away access to land, citizenship, tribal affiliation, and personhood. I understood that in its millennial iteration it was also being used to uphold white supremacy through its cooptation in postracial discourses and its method of racial redistricting, heteronormativity through its reliance on the family and biological reproduction, and racial essentialism through its reliance on racial descent through procreation. Even though I logically understood these criticisms, I still desired to identify as mixed race, so this dissertation became an attempt to unpack that desire.

While I began this project with the hopes that I could find a way in which mixed race discourse and mixed race identification could be deconstructive (e.g. disrupting the power of race or the established racial hierarchy; enabling nonheteronormative understandings of identity; displacing the power of whiteness in our society; etc.), in many ways writing this dissertation has not just shifted my perspective on mixed race and *Hapa* identity more generally, but on a very

personal level, it has also undone my own sense of identity. While my dissertation has indeed allowed me to grapple with the questions I posed at its start and led to some interesting insights through a perspective on affect, I have not been able to reconcile mixed race identity and mixed race discourse with producing structural changes that are anticolonial and/or antiracist. In fact, my dissertation has led me only to see more clearly how this discourse and these mixed race identities continue to participate and support structures of white supremacy through: a desire to claim access to whiteness and distance from racial minority groups via mixed race identity;<sup>2</sup> a perpetuation of the dominant racial hierarchy where whiteness is on top and blackness is on the bottom; a reinforcement of the power of race to demarcate and differentiate specific bodies while normalizing whiteness; a continuation of the structures of colonialism through the erasure of the specific ways in which mixed race has been used against Native Americans and African Americans in the United States.

### **Millennial Mixed Race Identity**

The European invention of race brought with it discourses of blood, fracture, division, dilution, adulteration, contamination, and racial mixing that have produced numerous examples of identities associated with mixed race throughout history—the mixed-blood, the half-breed, the mulatto, the hafu, the Eurasian, the quadroon, the hapa. Since the mid-1980s, there has been a particular emergence of mixed race identity that has been asserted by a growing number of individuals in the United States. In 2000, 6.8 million people self-reported two or more racial groups in response to the census’s question on race in the first national census to permit the

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<sup>2</sup> This is a point I will discuss in the chapters of this dissertation, specifically in regards to what

reporting of multiple racial groups by a single individual.<sup>3</sup> In 2010, the number of people who self-reported two or more racial groups on the national census was 9 million.<sup>4</sup> Various terms such as mixed race, multiracial, mixed-heritage, biracial, hapa, hafu, mulatto have (re)surfaced at the turn of the millennium as part of this specific moment of mixed race identification.

Although these particular terms and identities each have their own histories and contexts, each seems to follow a similar trajectory of (re)emergence at the end of the twentieth century as part of a larger discourse centering on mixed race identification. While each of these terms and the identities they represent are part of precise racial histories, each of the terms are being used by individuals grappling with a related set of problematics in the larger discourses of race and identity at the turn of the millennium. In this sense, although these terms are not interchangeable, they can be understood as belonging to related movements of mixed race identification at this precise moment of history.

The particular emergence of mixed race identifications towards the end of the millennium, can be linked to a few different historical moments in the last quarter of the twentieth century. First, many of the early scholars in the field of Mixed Race Studies<sup>5</sup> attribute

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<sup>3</sup> See “The Two or More Races Population: 2000” from the Census Brief 2000 at *Census.gov* for more information.

<sup>4</sup> See “The Two or More Races Population: 2010” from the 2010 Census Briefs at *Census.gov* for more information. Please note that the Census Brief 2010 cautions direct analysis of the increase in these total populations because of an error found in the calculations of the base number of this population may have been overstated by about 15 percent nationally (5). The Brief suggests looking at the percentage increased for specific racial combinations for more accurate accounts of the increases in population.

<sup>5</sup> In this dissertation, I will be using “Mixed Race Studies” to indicate scholarly writing pertaining to issues of mixed race and mixed race identification in the 1980s. These writers are dealing with a specific emergence of mixed race and mixed race identity in the end of the twenty-first century. Some of the early writers working within this field of study include: Maria P.P. Root, Carlos Fernandez, Cynthia Nakashima, G. Reginald Daniel, Naomi Zack, etc. “Mixed Race Studies” develops into “Critical Mixed Race Studies” as scholars begin to take a more

the growth of people identifying as mixed race around the millennium to the Supreme Court's *Loving v. Virginia* decision of 1967, which repealed antiscegenation laws in the United States. Although interracial mixing existed long before the repeal of *Loving*, Maria P.P. Root and Paul Spickard, two founding scholars in Mixed Race Studies, directly attribute the repeal of antiscegenation laws in *Loving v. Virginia* to a "biracial baby boom."<sup>6</sup> In a questionable correlation, Root argues that the increase in "the contemporary mixed heritage population is real, as evidenced by the steadily increasing number of people who have been recorded as interracially married since 1970."<sup>7</sup> She also argues that since 1989, "more than a million first-generation biracial individuals have been born in this country [the United States]."<sup>8</sup>

Root's conclusions are problematic for a number of reasons: not only does her data fail to take into account "biracial babies" born to individuals who may also identify as mixed race and/or as having mixed racial descent; she also fails to define her terms, primarily what is meant by "first generation" and "biracial;" and, while at times she bases her data on the census reports of 2000, at other times she fails to indicate how the data was obtained or who defines these particular births as "biracial" (parents, child, doctors, etc.). Most problematically, her conclusions support racial essentialism by directly attributing the increase in the multiracial population as a result of the growth in interracial marriage; this direct correlation affixes notions of (mixed) race to notions of biological descent through the interracial coupling and their acts of

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critical lens towards mixed race identification at the turn of the millennium. The field of Critical Mixed Race Studies is still in its early development, but many scholars have been writing with a critical lens towards mixed race identification since the mid-1980s.

<sup>6</sup> Several scholars make this connection. See Spickard (1989), Root (1996), Dalmage (2004).

<sup>7</sup> See Root "Multiracial Families and Children: Implications for Educational Research and Practice" (111). Retrieved *drmariaroot.com* 19 Dec 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Root believes that the number of "racially mixed people" in the United States is at its all-time peak, see Root's *The Multiracial Experience*, xiv-xix.

reproduction. While I do not agree with Root's conclusions or essentialism, one parallel conclusion can be drawn for this dissertation: since the 1980s, just a little over a decade after the *Loving v. Virginia* decision, there has been an increase in the number of individuals who identify as mixed race and people who are championing mixed race identification publicly.

Unlike Root's correlation suggests, the *Loving* decision cannot be understood as the sole impetus for this particular emergence of people who identify as mixed race at the end of the twentieth century. Other scholars have attributed the upsurge in these identifications of mixed race to the rise of multiculturalism and postmodernism at the turn of the millennium. Cynthia Nakashima, a prominent scholar in Mixed Race Studies, claims that multiculturalism's emphasis on microdiversity and the prominence of concepts such as *multiple positionalities* and the *transgression of boundaries* found in postmodernism and deconstruction have shifted the societal attitude towards liminal positionalities. She argues that these theoretical concepts have "functioned to shift the emphasis" of marginality from a position of disadvantage to one of advantage.<sup>9</sup> This is a significant insight because it demonstrates the theoretical setting in which mixed race discourse emerges at the turn of the millennium. Postmodernism and Deconstruction lay the groundwork for mixed race discourse to (re)emerge and mixed race identification can, thus, be understood as part of a postmodern sensibility that celebrates liminal positionalities in relation to race.

Along with the repeal of antimiscegenation laws and the rise of postmodernism, the increase in individuals identifying as mixed race around the millennium has also been connected to the legacies of the Civil Rights Movement and the backlash over race-based programs during

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<sup>9</sup> See Nakashima in *The Multiracial Experience*, 90. For a similar view also see Zack (1995) and Wesiman in *The Multiracial Experience*.

the neoconservative Regan era. In a more critical turn towards Mixed Race Studies, scholars such as Heather M. Dalmage argue that the specific iteration of mixed race identity that has arisen since the 1980s is not only “[b]uttressed by the strength of the civil rights movement,” but also by a conservative backlash of race-based programs in the Regan years.<sup>10</sup> Thus, in order to fully understand the rise of individuals identifying as mixed race at the turn of the millennium, we must understand how this emergence can be traced to legacies of the civil rights era in three distinct ways.

First, one of the greatest legacies of the civil rights era has been the civil rights legislation that was put in place to regulate discrimination and protect the rights of individuals in subordinated minority groups. In order to monitor discrimination, the legislation had to define the groups that would be protected under these laws. The Office of Management and Budget issued Directive No.15, which was adopted in 1977, for the purposes of specifying “standard classifications for record keeping, collection, and presentation of data on race and ethnicity.”<sup>11</sup> The “standard classifications” that were adopted through the OMB Directive 15 had the effect of normalizing an ethno-racial pentagon consisting of five mutually exclusive racial groups—*Asian /Pacific Islander, African American/Black, White/Caucasian, Native American/Native Alaskan,* and *Hispanic* (if conceived of racially).<sup>12</sup> Understanding this ethno-racial standardization is

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<sup>10</sup> See Dalmage’s *The Politics of Multiracialism* (2004) 1-4.

<sup>11</sup> See “Office of Management and Budget Directive N0. 15 Race and Ethnic Standards For Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting.” *Cdc.gov* Web. 20 Dec. 2017.

<sup>12</sup> I realize that these categories, even as the “five major racial groups,” are highly contested. For example, in the past few decades, there have been numerous debates about the pan-ethnic conflation of these categories, as well as how axes of class, gender, and sexuality may intersect with and trouble these categories. The OMB Directive 15 defining guidelines established these five mutually exclusive racial categories for the purpose of standardizing the tracking of racial data and discrimination in the United States in 1977. See Root’s Introduction and Carlos A. Fernandez’s chapter “Government Classification of Multiracial/Multiethnic People” in *The*

particularly crucial to comprehending the surfacing of mixed race identifications at the turn of the millennium; much of the early research and writing regarding mixed race identity in the 1980s concentrated on a supposed marginal positionality within this ethno-racial pentagon for people who identified as mixed race. In fact, during the 1980s many of the individuals who identified as mixed race actually defined themselves by specific racial combinations with particular racial histories; however, one of the ways in which all these individuals coalesced into a similar trajectory centered on a concentrated attack against the government's racial standards and reporting, particularly the census, educational and medical reporting, and housing data. This focused opposition to the government standardization of race has since become known as the Mixed Race Identity Movement.<sup>13</sup>

The second way in which the civil rights movements influenced mixed race identities at the turn of the millennium is through the establishment of identity politics and attending notions such as racial/ethnic pride, pride-in-difference, solidarity, and racial empowerment. The term *identity politics* was not fully developed until the Combahee River Collective coined the term in their statement in 1977: "focusing upon our own oppression is embodied in the concept of identity politics." The black feminists of the Collective recognized that their "specific oppression" had not been previously considered, and its attention offered the most radical

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*Multiracial Experience* and "Office of Management and Budget Directive N0. 15 Race and Ethnic Standards For Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting." *Cdc.gov* Web. 20 Dec. 2017.

<sup>13</sup> The Mixed Race Identity Movement is a term that I borrow from Rainer Spencer, who first used the term to designate early scholars and activists who fought for mixed race identification categories on the census, in schools, in the medical field, etc. These early activists and theorists often worked from the fields of psychology and sociology. Other scholars refer to the movement alternately as the Multiracial Movement, the Multiracial Identity Movement, the Mixed Race Identity Movement, the pro- Mixed Race Identity Movement. See page 12 of this dissertation for more information.



politics “directly out of [their] own identity.”<sup>14</sup> Although the term identity politics was not formulated until 1977, many of the philosophies regarding politics based on specific identities originated in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and developed further through Black Nationalisms and the Ethnic Pride Movements of the 1970s. Thus, by the mid-1980s when the Mixed Race Identity Movement begins to coalesce, there is a firm establishment of identity politics based around racial identities that greatly influences much of the early rhetoric of mixed race politics. Echoing the language of oppression used in the civil rights and ethnic pride movements, early theorists in the Mixed Race Identity Movement such as Root and Zack, argue individuals who identify as mixed race “are oppressed *as* people of color *by* people of color.”<sup>15</sup> Similarly, paralleling sentiments of the ethnic pride movements, theorists such as Root and Jan Weisman argue that individuals who identify as mixed race are participating in the emancipatory politics of self-naming that has worked for other racial minority groups.<sup>16</sup>

In regards to the surge of individuals identifying as mixed race in the 1980s, the final thread of influence that can be traced back to the Civil Rights Movements is actually linked to the backlash against race-based programs that were established during and after the Civil Rights Movement. In the 1980s, many conservatives promoted the idea of mixed race identification because it could be easily coupled with notions of post-race or racelessness that worked to support the neoconservative agenda to dismantle race-based programs established in the post-

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<sup>14</sup> See the “Combahee River Collective Statement (1977)” in *Women’s Rights in the United States: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Issues, Events, and People* by Tiffany k. Wayne (368-372).

<sup>15</sup> Emphasis original. See Root’s chapter “Within, Between, and Beyond Race” in *Racially Mixed People in America* (5).

<sup>16</sup> See Weisman’s “An ‘Other’ Way of Life: The Empowerment of Alterity in the Interracial Individual” in Root’s *The Multiracial Experience*, 153. See also Root’s chapter “Within, Between, and Beyond Race” in *Racially Mixed People in America* (5).

civil rights era. Although the conservative backlash against race-based programs may seem to be in complete tension with the other two historical influences of the Civil Rights Movement, the backlash against race-based programs is the direct result of the standardization of the ethno-racial pentagon and growth in ethno-racial pride. As minority groups gained rights and privileges from the civil rights protections, many conservative groups began to build animosity towards programs like affirmative action, which were based on membership to a minority group. While this post-race neoconservative agenda may seem irreconcilable with the identity politics of the Multiracial Identity Movement, they in fact aligned on many key issues.

The necessity of identification within minority groups for access to benefits and protections against discrimination caused the continued dominance of strict racial delineation in the United States in accordance with the ethno-racial pentagon that alienated individuals who identified as mixed race and angered neoconservatives who desired a return to the racist structure of pre-civil rights protections. Thus, in their own ways both neoconservatives and activists/theorists within the Multiracial Identity Movement sought to move “beyond” race and promoted a post-racial framework for the United States. Within this post-racial context, individuals who identified as mixed race were seen as the ultimate embodiment of moving “beyond” race and championed for their supposed ability to deconstruct the clear-cut racial categories of the strict ethno-racial paradigm.<sup>17</sup> While I do not agree with the viewpoint that

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<sup>17</sup> For instance, Naomi Zack in *Race and Mixed Race* sees mixed race in a biracial system as being “raceless.” She sees this position of “racelessness” as valuable because unlike other racial identities (presumably those Zack considers “raced” in opposition to mixed race’s “racelessness”), she believes mixed race identity to be new, creative, and free from history (164). In fact, she sees mixed race identity as a position of negation “a ‘view from nowhere,’ the position of nobody, based on nothing” and, thus, as “more authentic than projections of the self onto ‘one hundred generations’ that bear no relation to the self in the dimension to which one might turn for self-identification as a human being” (164).

people who identify as mixed race necessarily through that identification deconstruct racial categories, this was a popular belief in the early Multiracial Identity Movement<sup>18</sup> and must be recognized as a significant factor in the rise of mixed race identification at the turn of the millennium.

In this section, I have identified a unique moment in mixed race discourse that has emerged at the turn of the millennium, what I will call, *Millennial Mixed Race Identity*. Millennial Mixed Race Identity will be used as a term that identifies the specific moment of a rise in individuals who desire mixed race identification around and into the new millennium. I want to clarify that this is a separate term from *the Mixed Race Identity Movement* (which coalesced in the 1980s and 1990s); Millennial Mixed Race Identity is not only inclusive of the individuals who considered themselves an active part of that movement but it also includes individuals who may consider themselves apart from that movement but still desire mixed race identifications around the turn of the millennium. As a related term, *Millennial Mixed Race Identities* will be used to indicate together the various mixed race identity labels that individuals choose to use within this moment of mixed race discourse: mixed race, multiracial, Hapa, mulatto, hafu, Blasian, Mexipino, Calibinasian, Eurasian, Biracial, Afro-Asian, Blackanese, etc. Neither of these terms is meant to indicate an essentialist view of mixed race or to conflate the differences in racial histories, material conditions, or lived realities of the individuals who claim

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<sup>18</sup> For instance, in her essay “Beauty and the Beast: On Racial Ambiguity” published in Root’s *Racially Mixed People in America*, Carla K. Bradshaw claims that individuals who identify as mixed race are “harbinger[s]” who are “able to show the faults of the standard racial system” (78-79). See also Root’s essay “Within, Between, and Beyond Race” from the same collection and her Introduction in *The Multiracial Experience* (xx).

these identities or the precise racial mixtures that they signify. In fact, I believe that these more specific racial identity terms are far better signifiers because they express these inequities and histories. It is, however, important to identify the larger trend at work in relation to mixed race discourse and I believe *Millennial Mixed Race Identity* and *Millennial Mixed Race Identities* are more accurate than the more commonly used terms “mixed race” and “multiracial”: *Millennial Mixed Race Identity* and *Millennial Mixed Race Identities* highlight the specific historical moment at the turn of the millennium of a particular iteration of mixed race; and, these terms underscore that these iterations are, in fact, identities that individuals desire or use rather than a more essentialist perspective of biological determinism.

Although mixed race has always existed alongside and as a part of race and racial discourse, this particular emergence of mixed race must be understood as a specific racial formation that arises out of three key legacies of the civil rights era—the standardization of an ethno-racial pentagon put in place through the civil rights legislation to ensure protections against discrimination for minority groups; the establishment of identity politics; and the backlash over race-based programs in the neoconservative Reagan era. *Millennial Mixed Race Identity* must also be understood as a racial formation that emerges out of the rise of postmodernism and the promotion of liminal positionalities. And, lastly, we must recognize this particular emergence of mixed race as influenced by the repeal of antimiscegenation laws through *Loving v. Virginia*. Each of the historical factors has contributed to the context of *Millennial Mixed Race Identity* and set the stage for an increasing number of individuals to identify as mixed race at the turn of the millennium.

## **Mixed Race Studies and Critical Mixed Race Studies**

Along with the rise of Millennial Mixed Race Identity, there has also been a burgeoning field of scholarship related to mixed race that has emerged toward the turn of the millennium. I want to identify two different trajectories that develop out of this scholarship. The first thread is known as Mixed Race Studies and encompasses much of the earliest work in relation to the Mixed Race Identity Movement in the 1980s. Mixed Race Studies can be identified as scholarship pertaining to mixed race discourse and identity that emerged out of the grassroots organizations focused on interracial families in the late 1970s and early-1980s. Much of this scholarship was focused on promoting mixed race identification and recognition for children identified as mixed race and came out of the field of Clinical Psychology.<sup>19</sup> This scholarship concentrated on the “illogic” of racial categories,<sup>20</sup> the deconstructive power of mixed race,<sup>21</sup> the oppression of mixed race people,<sup>22</sup> the necessity for recognition of mixed race, and developmental theory for mixed race children. Maria P.P. Root, Naomi Zack, Paul Spickard, and G. Reginald Daniel were among the first and most prominent scholars to theorize this particular emergence of mixed race identity in the 1980s. Much of this scholarship can be considered part of the Mixed Race Identity Movement that coalesced in the 1990s as scholars, activists, and artists joined together to challenge the racial categories on the national Census.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See Root, Robin Miller, Carla K. Bradshaw, Deborah J. Johnson, James H. Jacobs, and Gibbs and Hines in Root’s *Racially Mixed People*.

<sup>20</sup> This is indeed the title of one of Paul Spickard’s essays, “The Illogic of American Racial Categories,” published in 1992 and included in Maria P.P. Root’s anthology *Racially Mixed People*.

<sup>21</sup> See Root *Racially Mixed People* (1992) and Naomi Zack *Race and Mixed Race* (1994).

<sup>22</sup> Please not that I do not believe people to be mixed race, but to identify as mixed race. However, many of these early scholars referred to mixed race as more of an essentialist category.

<sup>23</sup> The Mixed Race Identity Movement will be discussed in greater detail in the first chapter of this dissertation.

Unlike the scholarship of Mixed Race Studies that promotes and champions unquestioned multiracial identification and recognition, the deconstructive power of mixed race, or the positive positioning of mixed race, the second thread of scholarship that develops in relation to Millennial Mixed Race Identity is known as *Critical Mixed Race Studies*, which continues to focus on the concepts of mixed race and mixed race identity while being critical of these terms and identifications. Developing out of the more traditional academic areas of Ethnic Studies and Critical Race Theory, and in part, as a reaction to the earlier works of Mixed Race Studies and the Mixed Race Identity Movement of the 1980s, Critical Mixed Race Studies is more attentive to the ways in which mixed race and mixed race identity at the turn of the millennium may participate in and maintain structures of white supremacy, colonialism, heteronormativity, and race.

Although Critical Mixed Race Studies was not labeled as such until the inaugural Critical Mixed Race Studies Conference held at DePaul University in 2010, this critical turn is evident in writing during the census debates of the 1980s and 1990s. Coming from a Critical Race Theory perspective, Christine B. Hickman published an article in the *Michigan Law Review* of 1997 that embodies much of the critique against the change in census categories. She challenges the “multiracial viewpoint” during the census debates for its misperception of the one-drop-rule’s power to “forge a unified Black community” and effectively fight racism;<sup>24</sup> for the viewpoint’s reliance on a “voluntary nature of race” where the emphasis of racial identity is on individual

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<sup>24</sup> See “The Devil and the One Drop Rule: Racial Categories, African Americans, and the U.S. Census” by Christine B. Hickman from *Michigan Law Review*, Vol. 95, No. 5 (Mar., 1997), pp. 1161-1265 Published by: The Michigan Law Review Association Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1290008> Accessed: 03-01-2018 19:39 UTC

choice rather than history;<sup>25</sup> its reliance on biological understandings of race;<sup>26</sup> and, its neglect to account for the ways in which the category of Black is already inclusive of mixed race.<sup>27</sup> By the millennium, critical publications by prominent theorists such as Rainer Spencer, Kerry Ann Rockquemore, and Heather M. Dalmage repeated many of these earlier critiques but began to shift their focus from the narrow emphasis on the census category debate to the broader scholarship of the Multiracial Identity Movement. These early critical theorists argue that the Multiracial Identity Movement supported notions of racial essentialism, white supremacy, and heteronormativity, while aligning with neoconservative politics of colorblindness, as well as participating in an ahistorical approach to race and mixed race.

Although these theorists were critical of the methods of the Mixed Race Identity Movement, many of them still held onto the notion of mixed race and mixed race identity as potentially valuable. For example, while renouncing the concept of mixed race as an unquestioned, celebratory identity put forward by the Mixed Race Identity Movement, Rainer Spencer, one of the movement's most vocal critics, is still willing to hold onto mixed race/multiraciality as a discourse because he believes it is "the key to dissolving the hold that biological race maintains on us" once it offers a serious "challenge [to] the maintenance of whiteness and white supremacy."<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Heather M. Dalmage's critical turn on the concept of mixed race is not to abandon the concept of mixed race; but, rather, to investigate the ways in which racial thinking may "ultimately reproduce the hegemonic racial discourse" and also,

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 1244.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 1256.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 1260.

<sup>28</sup> See Spencer [2011], especially his introduction.

perhaps, posit a “counterhegemonic ‘multiracial politics grounded in historical and material realities.’”<sup>29</sup>

As examples, these theorists demonstrate that although Critical Mixed Race Studies may challenge certain threads of mixed race, mixed race identity, and the Mixed Race Identity Movement, it does not necessarily abandon the notion of mixed race as a discourse or identity at the turn of the millennium. As we move further into the millennium, a more established body of work has developed within the field of Critical Mixed Race Studies. There have been four annual Critical Mixed Race Studies Conferences and two volumes of the *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies*. There have been countless publications on the topic of Millennial Mixed Race Identity including: Spencer’s *Challenging Multiracial Identity* (2006) and *Reproducing Race: The Paradox of Generation Mix* (2011); Dalmage’s *The Politics of Multiracialism: Challenging Racial Thinking* (2004); Michelle Elam’s *The Souls of Mixed Folk: Race, Politics, and Aesthetics in the New Millennium* (2011); and, Habiba Ibrahim’s *Troubling the Family: The Promise of Personhood and the Rise of Multiracialism* (2012).

Similar to these theorists, this dissertation takes a critical perspective to Millennial Mixed Race Identity while still grappling with and engaging mixed race identity. Rather than abandoning mixed race identity due to its criticisms, this dissertation tries to, at least, understand the continued investments in mixed race identity in the new millennium. As I mentioned at the outset of this introduction, this project began in the hopes of salvaging mixed race identity and/or mixed race discourse in the face of the critical interruptions made by theorists such as Spencer, Dalmage, Elam, and others. As such, this dissertation finds itself firmly situated as a part of the developing field of Critical Mixed Race Studies.

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<sup>29</sup> See Dalmage 2.



## Affect Theory and Millennial Mixed Race Identity

Queer Theory has influenced Critical Mixed Race Studies in a variety of significant ways, but Affect Theory, a recent field that articulates in many ways with Queer Theory, has only recently begun to be used in the critical analysis of Millennial Mixed Race Identity and discourse. The most notable influence of Queer Theory on Critical Mixed Race Studies and Millennial Mixed Race Identity can be seen in the concentration and emphasis on the body within mixed race scholarship. Although usually not overtly acknowledged, Judith Butler's deconstructive theories of gender performativity, her development of Foucauldian theories of normativity and regulation, and her emphasis on how bodies are constructed through these processes have all been adapted to analyze racial identity in Critical Mixed Race Studies. There have been critical interjections into Critical Mixed Race Studies via perspectives of queering the color line,<sup>30</sup> sexuality,<sup>31</sup> performativity,<sup>32</sup> and gender. The most overarching influence of Queer Theory can be found in Critical Mixed Race Studies' emphasis on the body: the mixed race body<sup>33</sup> is often seen as destabilizing and deconstructive because it does not fit within the

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<sup>30</sup> Siobhan B. Somerville in her book *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture*, shows the mutual construction of racial and sexual definitions in the late nineteenth century that created two interconnected and tabooed types of desire—interracial and homosexual (34). She also gives a more detailed reading of the “mixed body” in relation to sexual politics and race in her Introduction (29-31).

<sup>31</sup> See Abby L. Ferber's “Defending the Creation of Whiteness: White Supremacy and the Threat of Interracial Sexuality” in Dalmage's *The Politics of Multiracialism: Challenging Racial Thinking* for more about the “mixed body,” sexuality, and race. See Jared Sexton's book *Amalgamation Schemes: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiracialism* for a detailed reading of the ways in which multiracialism reinforces normative sexuality.

<sup>32</sup> See Teresa C. Zackodnik's *The Mulatta and the Politics of Race* for a detailed criticism on analyses of passing through the lens of performativity and black feminism.

<sup>33</sup> Please note that my use of the term “mixed race body” is not used to suggest an essentialist understanding of mixed race. Rather I am using it as shorthand to refer to bodies of people who

normative categories of race and troubles understandings of racial purity;<sup>34</sup> the mixed race body is read as performing race especially in discussions of racial passing;<sup>35</sup> the mixed race body is often faced with the racialization of specific body parts;<sup>36</sup> there is an emphasis on the analysis of visual representations of mixed race bodies in popular culture.<sup>37</sup> In many ways, and in direct contradiction to the queer theories from which these perspectives are influenced, these perceptions of racially ambiguous bodies belie a certain understanding of mixed race as merely a redrawn racial category that suggests stability located and attached to these specific bodies.

While the current critical interjections into Critical Mixed Race Studies regarding the body have in many ways only worked to (re)stabilize a newly constructed racial identity and category—mixed race—affect theory offers a slightly more disruptive understanding of the possibilities of what bodies can do that might give Critical Mixed Race Studies a new perspective. In a somewhat different understanding of the body, affect is linked to a shifting sense of the body and understood as being something “found in those [fleeting/changing] intensities that pass body to body.”<sup>38</sup> Although racial formation theory has taught us that racial identities and racial categories are socially constructed and affected by the sociohistorical contexts of their creation on both micro- and macro-social levels, the affective components of

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identify as or are identified as racially ambiguous or mixed race. Many scholars working on mixed race do not make such distinctions.

<sup>34</sup>For example see Abby L. Ferber’s essay “Defending the Creation of Whiteness: White Supremacy and the Threat of Interracial Sexuality” in Dalmage [2004]. For further examples, see the introduction to Kip Fulbeck’s *Part Asian•100%* [2006] or the introduction to Claudia Chiawei O’Hearn’s book *Half and Half: Writers on Growing up Biracial and Bicultural* [1998].

<sup>35</sup>For discussions of how the mixed race boy passes across color lines, see Sollors [1997] or Michele Elam [2010].

<sup>36</sup>For examples of the racialization of body parts, see O’Hearn [1998] or Williams-Leon [2001], especially the introductions.

<sup>37</sup>For examples of the mixed race body in popular culture see Beltran [2008] or Streeter [2002].

<sup>38</sup>See Gregg and Seigworth’s Introduction, “An Inventory of Shimmers” from *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010), 1.

this sociality have often been written off as too personal (when discussing affects as emotions) or too ethereal (when discussing affects as intensities). Within Critical Mixed Race Studies there has not been a deep engagement with how affect can be used to deepen our understanding of the investments we have in racial identities, racial categories, and structures of race.

Within the more traditional field of race studies, a few theorists have begun to look at the relationship between affect and racial identity. In *The Melancholy of Race* (2001), Anne Anlin Cheng looks at how grief and race can be understood in relation to subjectivity. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Cheng is interested in the “role that grief plays in racial/ethnic subject formation.”<sup>39</sup> She argues that the continued relevance of racial identities can best be understood through a Freudian paradigm of melancholia, where she sees the psychic bind of rejection and incorporation in relation to racialization in the United States.<sup>40</sup> Cheng asserts that this paradigm of melancholia works in a bilateral manner in the United States: on the one hand, the dominant culture depends on both the rejection and inclusion of the racialized other in order to define itself; and, on the other hand, for the racialized and marginalized subjects, racial melancholia is both the “sign of rejection” and the “strategy in response to that rejection.”<sup>41</sup> In this analysis, the grief associated with the histories of race and racialization in the United States is fundamental to subject formation. Cheng’s assertions in her book are central to developing a deeper understanding of the way in which Millennial Mixed Race Identity is also influenced by affect at the turn of the millennium. One critical assertion made by Cheng that is crucial for this

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<sup>39</sup> See Cheng xi

<sup>40</sup> Cheng argues, “Racialization in America may be said to operate through the institutional process of producing a dominant, standard, white national ideal, which is sustained by the exclusion-yet-retention of racialized others” (10).

<sup>41</sup> Through a discussion of black cultural forms, Cheng suggests that the internalization of oppression does not necessarily equate to defeat but can actually suggest new modes of agency (21).

dissertation is that racial identities and racial categories remain central to group- and self-formations in the United States even as those identities may “prove to be prohibitive or debilitating.”<sup>42</sup> Similar to Cheng, this dissertation is concerned with understanding the continued investments in mixed race identities and racial categories even as those identities seem to support notions of white supremacy, colonialism, and heteronormativity.

Even as Cheng’s theory of racial melancholia proves invaluable for its combination of affect with theories of race, as well as a tool for understanding racial dynamics in the United States, Cheng’s analysis remains constrained by its concentration on the negative affects of grief. Building on Cheng’s queries about how affect provides an alternative understanding of the persistent investments in race and racial identities into the new millennium, this dissertation will look at the ways in which both positive and negative affective responses can elucidate the continued power of racial identifications.

Related to Cheng’s theory of the melancholy of race, David Eng also develops a theory of racial melancholia in his more recent book *The Feeling of Kinship* (2010) that brings together affect theory and race. Focused specifically on rethinking the disassociations of sexuality and race in relation to notions of family and kinship, Eng employs his concept of “queer diasporas” to reveal the ways in which kinship might fall out of its familiar structuralist and heteronormative forms. Concerned with how globalization might produce new forms of kinship and family, as well as the psychic dimensions of queer diaspora and globalization,<sup>43</sup> Eng appears to approach affect from the perspective of race. For Eng, race produces affect; he is interested

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<sup>42</sup> Cheng states, “while much critical energy has been directed toward deconstructing categories such as gender and race, less attention has been given to the ways in which individuals and communities remain invested in maintaining such categories even when such identities prove to be prohibitive or debilitating” (7).

<sup>43</sup> See Eng 15.

in the ways in which racial categories—the constraints of racial categories, the movements amongst racial categories, the destabilization of racial categories—generate certain affects (specifically feelings of loss). This perspective of how race produces specific affects is significant for this dissertation because it helps to explain the particular affects of isolation and misunderstanding experienced by individuals who desire Millennial Mixed Race Identity. Looking in particular at the experiences of Asian immigrants, adoptees, and migrants that come to the U.S, Eng observes that the racial status as perpetual foreigners bars them from full inclusion in the U.S. nation-state and causes vexed identifications to be formed for both the ideals of Asianness and whiteness, ultimately, leading to what he terms racial melancholia.<sup>44</sup> However, for Eng, affect always seems to be associated with feelings of loss. On the one hand, affect is tied to the melancholy and mourning in the experiences of Asian Americans and Asian immigrants that Eng discusses; and, on the other hand, affect is an alternative “language for loss” that supplements our current accounts of history.<sup>45</sup> Importantly, Eng’s extension of Freud’s melancholia does transform the notion of melancholia from an “individual predicament” of the psyche to a “intersubjective and collective” experience negotiated through feelings of kinship;<sup>46</sup> this extension sets the stage for understanding the ways in which affect becomes more than just an individualized experience, and rather is something that is tied to our relationships with the people around us (especially those we consider kin). This idea of affect as collective and intersubjective will be important in this dissertation’s consideration of racial identifications.

Building off Eng’s ideas about the negative affects that may be produced as a result of race, this

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<sup>44</sup> For Eng, “Racial melancholia [thus] describes a psychic condition by which vexed identification and affiliations with lost objects, places, and ideals of Asianness, as well as whiteness, remain estranged and unresolved” (116).

<sup>45</sup> See Eng’s introduction to his discussion of the Japanese internment film in Chapter 5.

<sup>46</sup> Eng 167.

dissertation will also look at how positive affect is implemented to combat these negative affects and further intensify the investment in racial identities.

Recently within Critical Mixed Race Studies, Habiba Ibrahim has engaged more significantly with affect and other queer theories in her book *Troubling the Family: The Promise of Personhood and the Rise of Multiracialism*. Ibrahim argues that multiracialism at the end of the twentieth century firmly established family time as its dominant timeline, rather than disrupting modernity's heteronormative structure of time through a more thorough understanding of the contributions of feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>47</sup> Understanding multiracial time as family time brings with it a focus on the ways in which multiracialism concentrated on private familial life and the affective relationships of familial love.<sup>48</sup> In this perspective, affect is seen as having “eclipsed a set of underlying political tensions and the way in which multiracial politics could expand possibilities for alternative conceptualizations of social relationships, behavior, and personal expression.”<sup>49</sup> While Ibrahim gives a very detailed reading of the ways in which multiracialism has neglected to account for its own genealogy, in her argument affect inadvertently becomes correlated with negativity, as multiracialism's focus on affect becomes understood as foreclosing that which could have been possible.

Habiba Ibrahim's alternative reading of the emergence, of what I call, Millennial Mixed Race Identity by specifically tracing its genealogy to feminist movements and the politics of personhood is influential for this dissertation. She notes that one of the most “enduring contributions” made by feminism is the concept that “what happens in our personal lives is

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<sup>47</sup> Ibrahim xxvii

<sup>48</sup> Ibrahim refers to this movement as the multiracial movement. I refer to it as the Multiracial Identity Movement, which I will detail more in chapter 1 of the dissertation.

<sup>49</sup> Ibrahim, 4.

inextricably linked to the public, political world.”<sup>50</sup> She highlights the way in which this concept was a significant precondition for the rise of Millennial Mixed Race Identity as “proponents of multiracialism” used their intimate relationships to challenge the dominant structures of race.<sup>51</sup> While Ibrahim’s arguments are compelling and explain more broadly how affect was used to politicize multiracialism during the 1990s, she does not spend time detailing how exactly or why these intimate relationships were central in the first place. Rather than focusing on the bigger ways in which affect was used as a political tool, I want to more thoroughly understand why these affective relationships became so central in Millennial Mixed Race Identity in the first place. By concentrating more precisely on the personal affective motivations of individuals desiring Millennial Mixed Race Identity, we can uncover an alternative understanding of the politics of recognition and the complications that arise from seeking out the state to solve affective conditions; understand why individuals continue to be invested in Millennial Mixed Race Identity well into the new millennium; and, what this desire for Millennial Mixed Race Identity reveals about the way in which affect and race come together in our everyday lives.

While Critical Mixed Race Studies has not engaged with theories of affect in very many meaningful ways, theories of affect have only recently begun to sufficiently engage with issues of race, racial identity, or Millennial Mixed Race Identity. Beginning in the mid-1990s, theories about affect have tended to take two main approaches, following from the writings of Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank, on the one hand, and Brian Massumi, on the other. This has created two main vectors within affect theory: Sedgwick’s writing follows from Silvan Tomkins’s “psychobiology of differential affects,” which focuses on an inside-out directionality of affect

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<sup>50</sup> Ibrahim, 6.

<sup>51</sup> Ibrahim, 7.

interested first in how affect motivates bodily drives;<sup>52</sup> and, Massumi, who follows Spinozist “ethology of bodily capacities” and looks at how affect exists (or works) within a web of relations across the human and nonhuman.<sup>53</sup> Coming out of these two vectors, this dissertation will lean closer to the Spinozan understanding of affect as being “in the midst of things and relations,” rather, than Tomkins’s more essentialist perspective of affect. Understanding affect as a part of a web of relations will allow us to see how a politics of state-sponsored recognition became a central focus for Millennial Mixed Race Identity; what sort of affective conditions led to this particular investment and the continued investments in Millennial Mixed Race Identity even after state-sponsored recognition was gained; and how affect circulates within our society and attaches to bodies in specific ways in relation to race and racial identity.

Recently, some theorists working in Affect Theory have begun to take into account issues of race in relation to affect. For instance, Lauren Berlant's *Cruel Optimism* pays "attention to diverse class, racial, sexual, and gendered styles of composure."<sup>54</sup> Although Berlant does begin to pay attention to race in relation to affect, Berlant’s discussion does not itself directly think about affect and race together in conversation or how one might be used to understand the other.

Most notably within Affect Studies, Sarah Ahmed engages affect theories with race. Over the course of her writings, Ahmed develops a Spinozist theory about the way in which bodies take form through their movement towards and away from other objects in the world and

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<sup>52</sup> See Gregory J Seigworth and Melissa Gregg’s Introduction "An Inventory of Shimmers" in *The Affect Theory Reader* (6).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid 6.

<sup>54</sup> See Berlant’s *Cruel Optimism* (2011), 5.



the feelings that are produced in regards to these other objects that a body encounters.<sup>55</sup> In *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*, Ahmed really begins to look at race in relation to affect through the lens of encounter as she defines a racial encounter as an encounter in which a subject comes to understand its body image in distinction from an Other.<sup>56</sup> Crucially for this dissertation, Ahmed contends that when these subjects take on a racialized understanding of their body, there is also a bearing of “bodily others which both precede them and are reinvented by them.” She continues that these can be understood as “traces” of “social antagonism and conflict.”<sup>57</sup> In chapter three of this dissertation, I will use Ahmed’s understanding of the racial encounter to reconceptualize Millennial Mixed Race Identity by focusing on the affective residues left by these encounters are central in shaping our identifications.

In *Queer Phenomenology: Orientation, Objects, Others*, Ahmed advances the arguments made in her previous book and articulates how bodies become orientated by how they take up time and space. Here, she most fully engages race and racial identity by looking at the way in which orientations (the lines we take or ways we turn) “involves a racialization of space” and how becoming racialized contains an understanding of how we occupy spaces that are also already occupied by an effect of racialization.<sup>58</sup> Ahmed herself identifies as mixed race multiple times throughout her book. In fact, she uses her experiences of “being mixed race” to develop what she calls a *mixed orientation* that does not merely bring together two different sides to

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<sup>55</sup> See Ahmed’s “Happy Objects” in *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010), her book *Queer Phenomenology* (2006), and her book *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Postcoloniality* (2000) for different developments of this understanding of the body and its relationship to affect.

<sup>56</sup> See Ahmed (2000) 43. This will be discussed further in chapter three of this dissertation.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>58</sup> Ahmed (2006) 23.

create something new; rather, a mixed orientation “preserves the secrecy of the other side, as the ‘side’ that is behind what we face.”<sup>59</sup> Although Ahmed tries very hard not to fall into the trappings of mixed race discourse, I believe she intimates the celebratory positioning of mixed race when she sees that “being mixed offers more than one side from which to have an ‘angle’ on the world.”<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, although she consistently argues about the ways in which bodies take shape through orientations in time and space via experience; she refers multiple times to simply “being mixed race” rather than specifying the way in which mixed race is not a mere fact of being or that she understands her body as mixed race due to these very orientations. In this dissertation, I would like to extend Ahmed’s queer phenomenology—the way she understands that bodies take shape through orientations in time and space—to reconceptualize mixed race identification. Her theories are particularly relevant for this reformulation because they highlight not only the way in which identity is a continual and ongoing process; but also how that process is shaped recursively through encounters and experiences, how bodies remember over and through time, how histories (not just personal) can be behind bodies that are behind what we face in the present moment. These ideas will be discussed at length in the last chapter of this dissertation to develop an understanding of what I call racial affect constantly circulating within our society and attaching to bodies in moments of encounter.

Another theorist, Clare Hemmings in her article “Invoking Affect: Cultural Theory and the Ontological Turn” brings race into her discussions of affect through her notion of *affective racialization*.<sup>61</sup> Hemmings uses Fanon and Lorde to theorize the way in which the bodies of

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<sup>59</sup> Ahmed (2006) 153.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Affective racialization will be discussed more at length in chapter three of this dissertation.

Fanon and Lorde become known to them as raced via an affective response by another person.<sup>62</sup>

Hemmings concept of affective racialization is significant for the work of this dissertation precisely because it engages affect to understand racial identification. However, in Hemmings conceptualization the raced body comes to understand itself as raced via another's affective response to that body. This dissertation will take this understanding of affective racialization and build upon it to understand the way in which these affects related to race exist constantly within our society, what I call racial affects, and circulate within society attaching to bodies in moments of racial encounter. Further expanding on Hemmings, this dissertation will not only look at the way in which affective racialization works across the black/white color line, but also how affective racialization can be understood for individuals who identify as mixed race and as having Asian/American ancestry.<sup>63</sup>

Situating itself firmly within Critical Mixed Race Studies, this dissertation will use affect as a lens to understand the investments and development of Millennial Mixed Race Identity in the Mixed Race Identity Movement, as well as the more specific identity of Hapa. I believe there has been a missed opportunity to fully comprehend the ways in which mixed race identities have been heavily influenced by affective attachments to the people we surround ourselves with; the affective responses to our past experiences of race and racial encounter; the affective relief developed to combat our past affective experiences; and the racial affects that continually circulate within our racialized society and attach to differently raced bodies during moments of

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<sup>62</sup> See Hemmings 561-562.

<sup>63</sup> I use Palumbo-Liu's solidus here in the term "Asian/American" because it identifies the flexibility and unpredictability of the relationship between the two terms "Asian" and "American" that "marks *both* the distinction installed between 'Asian' and 'American' *and* a dynamic, unsettled, and inclusive movement" or "sliding" between the terms. See Palumbo-Liu's *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (1; emphasis original).

encounter. Using affect to read some of the major texts about Millennial Mixed Race Identity will produce an alternative understanding of the continued investments in Millennial Mixed Race Identities. Specifically, this dissertation will look at key texts from before the millennium and the early iterations of Millennial Mixed Race Identity found in the Mixed Race Identity Movement of the 1980s and 1990s. In the later chapters, this dissertation will move to an investigation of a more precise Millennial Mixed Race Identity for individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry after the turn of the millennium. Within Critical Mixed Race Studies, there has been a significant amount of criticism about the ways in which Millennial Mixed Race Identities support notions of antiblackness and contribute to white supremacy and heteronormativity. This criticism has tended to focus on individuals who identify as black/white racially mixed and the black/white color line. As a means of extending these criticisms, I focus on the specific demographic of individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry after the millennium because many of the criticisms about Millennial Mixed Race Identity have not considered the ways in which Asian America also participates in upholding notions of white supremacy, heteronormativity, and colonialism through the continued investment in mixed race identifications.

## **Chapter Summaries**

### **Chapter 1: Affective Aspirations: The Role of Affect and State-Sponsored Recognition within The Mixed Race Identity Movement**

By the mid-1980s, small grassroots organizations focusing on interracial families began to coalesce across the United States focusing their attention on fighting for government recognition of mixed race identity and its inclusion as a racial category on the upcoming

centennial census. Around the same time, various scholars also began to publish academic work that focused on mixed race identity and recognition. Together the explosion of creative expression, newsletters, activism within the community organizations, and academic publications indicate the early momentum of the Mixed Race Identity Movement that coalesced with the common goal of petitioning the government of the United States to amend the racial categories on the centennial census.

Scholars working in Critical Mixed Race Studies and the earlier Mixed Race Studies have tended to explicate the development of the Mixed Race Identity Movement through three critical trajectories. First, the Mixed Race Identity Movement is understood as a development of a “biracial baby boom” resulting from the repeal of antimiscegenation laws with the 1967 Supreme Court decision *Loving v. Virginia*.<sup>64</sup> Second, the Mixed Race Identity Movement and its proponency of mixed race identity are traced through a history of mixed race identities such as the tragic mulatto that now gets coopted through a postmodern sensibility celebrating multiplicity and liminal positionality.<sup>65</sup> Lastly, the Mixed Race Identity Movement gets explained through a history of the United States census or American racial classification system.<sup>66</sup> While each of these trajectories is crucial to a full understanding of the Mixed Race Identity Movement, critical scholarship has tended to ignore how affect influenced investments in Millennial Mixed Race Identity. Discounted as personal perspectives, scholarship

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<sup>64</sup> An example of the centrality of the *Loving* decision is depicted through the annual Loving Day celebrations held across the United States that celebrate interracial couples and families and seek “connection between multiracial communities” ([www.lovingday.org](http://www.lovingday.org)). See also Root (1996), Daniel (2001) 106, Dalmage (2004) 1, and DaCosta (2007) 86; for a critique of the centrality of *Loving* see Spencer (2006).

<sup>65</sup> See Nakashima in Root’s *The Multiracial Experience* (1996), Spencer (2011) 35, Spencer (2004) 104-106.

<sup>66</sup> See Root (1996) xvii, Daniel (2001), DaCosta (2007) 40-44, Goldberg (1995) 239-240, Fernandez (1996) 20-21.

surrounding the Mixed Race Identity Movement has missed an integral factor in the formation of Millennial Mixed Race Identities that continue to hold meaning for individuals well into the millennium.

Examining some of the key texts of the Mixed Race Identity Movement, this dissertation will use an affective lens to offer a supplement to critical histories of the Mixed Race Identity Movement; uncover the complications that arise from a politics of recognition based on seeking out the state to solve affective conditions; and, reveal the ways in which the power of race threatens even the most seemingly secure positions of kinship. Specifically, this chapter will analyze two key testimonies given by arguably the most prominent figures within the Mixed Race Identity Movement during the census debates: the “Statement of Ramona E. Douglass, President of the Association of MultiEthnic Americans, Member of the Federal 2000 Census Advisory Committee” and “Statement of Susan Graham, Executive Director, Project RACE, Inc.” In addition, this chapter will also examine one of the foundational academic texts from the Mixed Race Identity Movement—Maria P.P. Root’s “A Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People” published in her anthology *The Multiracial Experience* (1996). Each of these texts offers a unique opportunity to unearth the affective aspirations and motivations that influenced the Mixed Race Identity Movement and the investment in Millennial Mixed Race Identities.

Although an attention to affect may provide a supplemental perspective on the development of Millennial Mixed Race Identity, it is unlikely that this perspective will disrupt the white supremacist and heteronormative underpinnings of the Mixed Race Identity Movement. It will, however, offer an opportunity to comprehend the continued investments in Millennial Mixed Race Identities into the new millennium in the face of such critiques. Perhaps, in understanding the ways in which affect heavily influences our choices of racial identity, we

can understand the continued power that race and racial identification hold over us. We can also better realize the difficulties that arise through the development of a politics based on affect and seeking out the state for the resolution of affective states rather than material inequities.

## **Chapter 2: Affective Operations: Affect, Recognition, and Hapa Identity in the Post-Millennial United States**

In 2000, the centennial census became the first census to permit individuals to choose more than one racial category in response to the question about racial identity. For all intents and purposes, this census change marked the realization of the major goal of the Mixed Race Identity Movement. Despite obtaining the state's recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity, in the new millennium individuals continue to express the same feelings of isolation, invisibility, and misunderstanding in relation to racial identity that writers in the Mixed Race Identity Movement expressed ante-millennium.

In response to this failure of state-sponsored recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity to offer affective resolution, many individuals have sought out smaller communities and more specific Millennial Mixed Race Identities to solve their affective states. One such particular group to develop in relation to the recognition of a more specific Millennial Mixed Race Identity is made up of individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry.

Within the discourses of Critical Mixed Race Studies and Asian American Studies, there are a number of terms that have emerged to signify individuals who identify as mixed race and

identify as, at least partially, having Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander ancestry.<sup>67</sup> The preeminent race scholar Michael Omi uses the term *multiracial Asian Americans* in his “Forward” to Nakashima and Williams-Leon’s anthology *The Sum of Our Parts: Mixed Heritage Asian Americans*. In his “Foreword” Omi is careful to highlight: the presupposition of clear and distinct races (even though the reality of race is much more murky) inherent within the concept of multiraciality or mixed race; the fact that race as a biological category has been widely discredited within the sciences; and, that the concepts of multiraciality and mixed race, as they exist within the contemporary discourse of race, must be understood as social constructions that have gained a specific cultural and political meaning at this particular moment of history.<sup>68</sup> While Omi’s discussion clearly lays out the way in which mixed race is not biologically determined, his use of the term *multiracial Asian Americans* does not highlight that this particular identity is very often chosen over other identity terms. Emphasizing the choice of this identity is especially important because these identity choices are not available to all bodies equally;<sup>69</sup> other racial identities (such as African American/Black) are often ascribed to particular bodies rather than asserted by the individual.

Scholars Theresa Williams-Leon and Cynthia L. Nakashima, two prominent theorists working within Critical Mixed Race Studies on issues related to Asian America, use the term *mixed heritage Asian Americans* as part of the title of their anthology *The Sum of Our Parts: Mixed Heritage Asian Americans* (2001). This anthology was one of the first works to critically

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<sup>67</sup> Please note that I understand race is not biologically inherited but there is an inherent element of racial essentialism that exists in any understanding of mixed race identity.

<sup>68</sup> See Michael Omi’s “Foreword” in *The Sum of Our Parts: Mixed Heritage Asian Americans* edited by Teresa Williams-Leon and Cynthia L. Nakashima (ix).

<sup>69</sup> The idea of privilege within this particular identity will be discussed at length within Chapter 2 of this dissertation.



address the specific sociological issues of people who identify as mixed race and Asian American, Asian, or Pacific Islander in the United States. This term emphasizes that there are people who want to assert mixed race identities within the larger Asian American population. However, the actual phrasing not only intimates race as hereditary, but, also, more accurately suggests an ethnic mixture amongst various Asian pan-ethnicities (i.e. Vietnamese, Japanese, Indian, Korean, Chinese, etc.) rather than a mixture between various socially constructed racial groups (as defined by the OMB Directive No. 15).

Wei-ming Dariotis, another prominent scholar working on multiraciality in Asian America, also uses the term *mixed heritage Asian Americans* in several of her publications including: “Introducing Mixed Heritage Asian American Literature” published in *Mixed Heritage Asian American Literature*. Spec. issue of *Asian American Literature: Discourses and Pedagogies* 3 (2012) and, *War Baby|Love Child: Mixed Race Asian American* co-edited with Laura Kina. Daritois has in recent years chosen to employ *mixed heritage Asian Americans* (with the etymological problems discussed above) over another term she had previously used: *Hapa*.<sup>70</sup> The issues with this term will be discussed at length within this chapter. Rather than rely on any of the signifiers currently circulating within Critical Mixed Race Studies and Asian American Studies, which suggest that an individual *is* a particular race or combination of races, I will use a more cumbersome signifier to remain as precise as possible in depicting the way in which these particular individuals chose to *identify* in specific racialized ways. I also want to be cautious not to conflate Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander. One of the major critiques I will discuss in this chapter has to do with this conflation. As such, I will not be using Pacific Islander as part of my signifier since most of the writers, scholars, and other individuals in this discussion are not

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<sup>70</sup> See Dariotis’s essay “Hapa: The Word of Power.”

of Pacific Islander ancestry. Throughout this chapter, I will refer to these individuals as *individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry*.<sup>71</sup>

Individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry continue to express feelings of isolation, misrecognition, and misunderstanding in relation to their racial identity well after the implementation of a multiracial identifier on the centennial census. This perpetuation of the negative feelings associated with racial identity is evidenced in the projects of many writers, activists, scholars, and artists in the new millennium. This chapter will examine the ways in which one of the most well-known projects Kip Fulbeck's *Part Asian 100% Hapa* reveals more precisely how affects arise from the perception of failed racial recognition for individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. The chapter will also look at the ways in which smaller communities and the Millennial Mixed Race Identities they represent may work to alleviate the negative affects experienced by these individuals that the state has failed to resolve through the state-sponsored recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity. More importantly, this chapter will examine the ways in which the pursuit of assuaging negative affects through a project such as *Part Asian 100% Hapa*, the community it forms, and the Millennial Mixed Race Identity it propagates actually work to uphold notions of white supremacy and racial hierarchy through colonialism; maintains notions of white supremacy and racial hierarchy through its own investments in the privileging of whiteness; reifies racial essentialism and the power of race to control and govern different bodies; conflates the distinctions of Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander and the repercussions this has on the

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<sup>71</sup> Although the work of Omi and Winant has been used to widely discredit biological understandings of race, there is an inherent reification of racial essentialism at work within the very concept of mixed race since it depends upon the presupposition that race can be inherited by offspring from their biological parents.

material differences and struggles between these varied groups. Investigating the particular Millennial Mixed Race Identity, Hapa, through the lens of affect will elucidate the complications that arise from the continued investments in a politics of recognition built on the premise of affective resolution.

### **Chapter 3: Affective Revelations: Racial Affect and the Significance of Encounter**

As we move further away from the Mixed Race Identity Movement and into the new millennium, there appears to be a growing rift within the community of people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry that reflects a similar fissure within the larger discourse of Millennial Mixed Race Identity. On the one hand, there are those who continue to use the identifier Hapa and other Millennial Mixed Race Identities; on the other hand, there are a growing number of individuals, myself included, who question the viability of Millennial Mixed Race Identities such as Hapa, as well as the value of mixed race politics more broadly. Although this fissure has seemed to deepen and more people are taking a critical turn on Millennial Mixed Race Identity, it would appear that the continued relevance of Millennial Mixed Race Identity and Hapa identity in popular culture reflect the fact that these identities have made their foothold on the American consciousness and are seemingly here to stay as a part of a reconceptualized ethno-racial structure.

According to the first post-millennial census in 2010 the population of individuals who identified as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry increased by over one million people between the Census 2000 and Census 2010, putting the current reported population of

individuals who identify as “Asian in combination”<sup>72</sup> at 2.6 million individuals in 2010.<sup>73</sup> At 2.6 million individuals, the “Asian in combination” was one of the three largest “multiple-race groups”<sup>74</sup> tabulated through this census data.<sup>75</sup> The census data in 2010 also showed that the “Asian-alone-or-in-combination population” increased at “faster rate than all other race groups in the country.”<sup>76</sup> Looking at the increasing growth rates of both the overall “Asian-alone-or-in-combination” and the “Asian in combination” categories, it becomes clear that moving further into the millennium individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry will likely continue to use and desire mixed race identifications. If this is the case, I believe there must be a reconceptualization of mixed race identification in relation to individuals who identify

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<sup>72</sup> According to the “The Asian Population: 2010” from the Census Brief 2010, *Asian in combination* is the term used by the Census for individuals who report Asian and one or more other racial categories in the racial identity question on the census. This category is differentiated from *Asian alone* category where individuals only reported Asian as their racial group. See *Census.gov* for definitions. <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-11.pdf>

<sup>73</sup> See this dissertation Ch.2 page 4-5 for more information.

<sup>74</sup> The other groups that experienced the highest rate of growth were people who reported *White and Black*, people who reported and *White and Some Other Race*. See “The Two Or More Races Population: 2010” from the *Census Brief 2010* (5). According to the Census report there was an error that occurred in the processing of data involving *Two or More Races* population. The report notes that this miscalculation resulted in an overestimation of the total population reporting *Two or More Races* by about 1 million people nationally. The report clarifies that the error “almost entirely affected race combinations involving the *Some Other Race* indicator. Therefore, the report warns that data users should instead look at specific race combinations such as “White and Asian” or “Black and Asian” to examine population changes. See “The Two Or More Races Population: 2010” from the *Census Brief 2010* (3-4).

<sup>75</sup> See the “The Asian Population: 2010” from the Census Brief 2010” (4).

<sup>76</sup> According to the “The Asian Population: 2010” from the *Census Brief 2010*, *Asian in combination* is the term used by the Census for individuals who report Asian and one or more other racial categories in the racial identity question on the census. This category is differentiated from *Asian alone* category where individuals only reported Asian as their racial group. See *Census.gov* for definitions. The Census reports that the *Asian alone* category grew at a rate four times faster than the total U.S. population in 2010 and that the *Asian-alone-or-in-combination* group experienced a slightly growth. See “The Asian Population: 2010” from the *Census Brief 2010* for these numbers (2-3).

as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry that considers their own positioning and desires within a racial system that devalues blackness and aggrandizes whiteness in order to avoid complicity within a reformulated racial structure.

In this chapter, I will use an affective lens to reconsider the more established ways in which mixed race identification has been understood. Habiba Ibrahim has illuminated the way in which the Mixed Race Identity Movement and mixed race discourse have reinforced a heteronormative concept of time based on the privileging of the family and the wellbeing of multiracial children. This conflation with heteronormative time is replicated in the traditional identity narratives of individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. These identity narratives depict the process of mixed race identification as linear by privileging affective resolution through the recognition of a mixed race identity (whether that be a personal recognition/acceptance or a public confirmation). In this chapter, I will use Sara Ahmed's affective strategy of queer phenomenology in particular to shift the focus of mixed race identification from its typical heteronormative time sequencing to a more continual recursive understanding of the process of identification developed through our constant contact with other bodies in space and time.

While this reconceptualization of identity formation is not new and has been applied in various iterations to other identities, Critical Mixed Race Studies has not yet fully considered mixed race identification or Millennial Mixed Race Identity through this perspective. Understanding how our sense of self is constantly shaped through our contact with other bodies, other spaces, and other times in relation to affect and emotion is a particularly relevant approach

for people who identify as mixed race<sup>77</sup> because of the constant confrontation with questions about racial identity in our everyday encounters. While other bodies also experience constant interrogations over their gendered, racial, sexual, able-bodied identities in everyday life to be sure, as we saw in the previous chapters Millennial Mixed Race Identities have in some significant ways emphasized affective conditions as a central component in their politics of recognition. Due to this focus within Millennial Mixed Race Identity, it becomes crucial that these encounters and affect be part of a reformulation of mixed race identification moving forward. Thus, this chapter will bring into contact Critical Mixed Race Studies and Ahmed's affective strategy of queer phenomenology in order to not only shift the focus of mixed race identification from its heteronormative structuring of time, but also to uncover the ways in which racial affect is constantly at work within our society attaching to bodies in moments of racial encounter. In order to reorient mixed race identification as such, I will use Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu's book *When Half is Whole: Multiethnic Asian American Identities* as a base from which to explain a reconfiguration of mixed race identification for people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. My hope is that this affective reformulation of the significance of the recursive process of identity formation for individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry will allow these individuals to better understand their position and desire for mixed race identification in a racial system that values whiteness and perpetuates colonialism; create affective connections between different subordinated groups;

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<sup>77</sup> This is not unique to mixed race discourse or mixed race identification. In fact, I want to note that this understanding of identification is useful in relation to all forms of identities (gendered, racial, sexual, etc.) and has been explicated in relation to many other embodied forms through Queer Studies and Affect Theory. I also want to clarify that this consideration is not unique to mixed race and that other bodies may experience the same type of daily interrogations about gendered, racial, sexual, abled-bodied identities and identifications.

illuminate the ways in which affect can orient bodies towards each other through racial history; and, ultimately, avoid becoming complicit in structures of colonialism and white supremacy.

Perhaps, going back to the license plate on my mother's mini-van—R3HAPAS—can also bring together what I've been trying to outline here about the ways in which we can use affective strategies in conversation with mixed race identification. As we saw at the outset of this story, the license plate can be understood as a symbol of multiracial time—it privileges the family and represents heteronormative time—in its attention to the children of an interracial relationship (the identified HAPAS). It also acts as a symbol of affective resolution as it confirms a Millennial Mixed Race Identity through a visual economy of recognition—we see and read the plate as affirming Hapa identity.

However, we can also reorient our understanding of that license plate by shifting our attention from the finished product of the license plate and look at the process by which it is created. On the one hand, the creation of the plate (in a recent past when I was five years old) involved multiple histories further in the past—that of each of my parents, a history of the term Hapa, that of other ambiguous bodies identified as having partial Asian/American ancestry, and that of the actual physical plate. The creation of the license plate involved each of my parents growing up in their own experiences of race and identity, my parents meeting, my parents deciding to have children together; it involved a history of privilege—my parents being able to afford the minivan, to afford to have children, and to afford the custom license plate; it involved at least one of my parents learning about or hearing the term Hapa (in this case it was my mother who grew up spending summers on Maui with her grandmother). This latter conception of creation of the license plate holds significant meaning for understanding what I'm trying to do in

terms of reorienting the way in which we understand mixed race identification. Rather than focusing on the end result and its affective resolution via recognition, I want to focus on the process and elements of creation, the traces and histories that leave their impressions in the process of creation.

In writing this dissertation not only have I been exposed to and engaged deeply with the established criticisms of mixed race discourse at the turn of the millennium, but I have also attempted to see a continued use for Millennial Mixed Race Identity. Although I have attempted to understand why Millennial Mixed Race Identities hold such value for the individuals who desire these identifications and depicted the importance of affective experiences and histories within individual identifications, I'm not sure that mixed race identification or Millennial Mixed Race Identity will ever be able to escape its own privileging of whiteness and perpetuation of colonialism. I do not believe that mixed race identification or Millennial Mixed Race Identity holds any inherent deconstructive power to displace the power that race and racial identity hold over us in contemporary American society. What I do hope becomes clear through this dissertation is that by implementing Affect Theory and concentrating on an affective perspective, I am providing a supplemental or alternative understanding to the Mixed Race Identity Movement and the continued investments in Millennial Mixed Race Identities well after the turn of the millennium.



## Affective Aspirations: The Role of Affect and State-Sponsored Recognition within The Mixed Race Identity Movement

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, small grassroots organizations focused on interracial families began to form across the United States. White women involved in interracial relationships and the mostly white mothers of mixed race families were prominent members and founders of these initial groups.<sup>78</sup> Among the first to be founded, IPride<sup>79</sup> in San Francisco helped parents become politically active in the California school system in the early 1980s.<sup>80</sup> The group was originally formed in 1979 by local parents to pressure the school system into changing their racial classification policies to include a means for their children to identify as mixed race on school forms.<sup>81</sup> Another early group, the Biracial Family Network in Chicago (BFN), began primarily as a support network for interracial couples (couples that identified as different races)<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> As mentioned below, two white mothers, Susan Graham and Chris Ashe, founded PROJECT RACE. See “Project Race History.” *Projectrace.com*. 2015. Web. 21 Apr. 2015. Additionally, Alicia Doo Castagno’s thesis “Founding Mothers: White Mothers of Biracial Children in the Multiracial Movement (1979-2000)” distinguishes between interracial family organizations and multiracial organizations. She differentiates multiracial organizations as those founded by multiracial people and interracial family organizations as those founded mostly by white women to provide resources for interracial families (26). She claims that within the first multiethnic collective, AMEA, made up of fourteen interracial organization charters, thirteen were founded by white women (footnote 37). This dissertation does not recognize a distinction between interracial family organizations and multiracial groups because all can be considered as part of the early Mixed Race Identity Movement.

<sup>79</sup> “Home.” *Ipride.org*. 2007. Accessed. 3 Apr. 2013. According to Heather M. Dalmage in *The Politics of Multiracialism: Challenging Racial Thinking*, IPride is the “oldest multiracial” organization (3).

<sup>80</sup> Other scholars in Critical Mixed Race Studies support this genealogy. See Nakashima in Root’s *The Multiracial Experience* (1996), Dalmage (2004), Spencer (2006), Castagno (2012), Douglass (“Evolution of the Multiracial Movement.” *MixedHeritageCenter.org*. 2015. Web. 21 Apr. 2015.)

<sup>81</sup> See Dalmage (2004) 2-3.

<sup>82</sup> It is important to note, most of the early organizations were formed by white mothers and interracial couples (couples who identify as different races) rather than individuals who themselves might identify as mixed race.

that were fighting for their children to be identified as mixed race rather than as belonging to only one racial group.<sup>83</sup> According to one of the founders of BFN, her child was the reason she began the group with five other women who were also mothers of biracial children.<sup>84</sup> Similarly PROJECT RACE (Reclassify All Children Equally) co-founded by Susan Graham and Chris Ashe, two white European American mothers of multiracial families, focused on children and the collection of racial data in education, as well as data for health services, employment, and housing.<sup>85</sup> As the children of these interracial couples became teens and adults, the organizations grew and formed new sub-groups geared toward these younger individuals who began to identify themselves as mixed race. By the mid-1980s the small localized groups focused more explicitly on individuals who self-identified as mixed race began to coalesce into larger national organizations, including MAVIN and the Association of MultiEthnic Americans (AMEA). So while the movement began with a few isolated support groups for interracial couples, by the mid-1980s these groups were comprised not only of parents fighting for their children's ability to identify as mixed race, but also a growing number of young adults from a variety of racial mixtures who identified themselves (or wished to identify) as mixed race. Banding together, these larger organizations focused their attention on fighting for government recognition via the addition of a multiracial category on the upcoming centennial census.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Dalmage (2004), 3.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Graham does not distinguish if the children she champions for identify as mixed race or are identified as mixed race by their parents and other adults. See Graham in Root's *The Multiracial Experience* (1996) 37-48.

<sup>86</sup> Interestingly, there is no mention of the types of racial mixtures that existed within the interracial couples who formed these initial support groups. A similar absence of racial detail exists in the eventual data collected from the census concerning the multiracial population, according to the Census 2000 Brief released in November 2001 there was no manner by which to distinguish what types of specific racial mixtures made up the 6.8 million people who reported

As these grassroots organizations began to carve out a social space for individuals desiring mixed race/multiracial recognition, by the mid-1980s, various scholars were also arguing for mixed race identification and recognition in the academic and political spheres. Maria P.P. Root, Naomi Zack, and G. Reginald Daniel were among the first to theorize and politicize this particular iteration of mixed race at the end of the millennium, what I have identified as Millennial Mixed Race Identity.<sup>87</sup> In the mid-1990s, both academics and leaders of the organizations presented testimonies before the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology of the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight. Together the proliferation of academic writing and research centered on mixed race identity and the explosion of creative expressions, newsletters, and activism within the community organizations focused on mixed race identities in the 1980s and 90s indicates the early momentum of the Mixed Race Identity Movement.<sup>88</sup>

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two or more races on the centennial census. It was noted how many people responded within each of the racial categories listed (i.e. how many people marked white, how many people responded African American, etc.) but no determination of which combinations were reported by actually reported. See “The Two or More Races Population: 2000 Census 2000 Brief.” *Census.gov*. November 2001. Retrieved 28 June 2015.

<sup>87</sup> See Introduction for a better definition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity.

<sup>88</sup> According to Cynthia Nakashima in her essay “Voices From the Movement: Approaches to Multiraciality” (in *The Multiracial Experience*), the Multiracial Movement is comprised of a mixture of “community organizations, campus groups, magazines and newsletters, academic research and writing, university courses, creative expression, and political activism—all created and done by mixed-race individuals and members of *interracial families*, with the purpose of voicing their own experiences, opinions, issues, and interests. See Root (1996) 80. Heather Dalmage in her Introduction to *The Politics of Multiracialism: Challenging Racial Thinking*, extends Nakashima’s definition to include all members of multiracial families, whether they are politically active or not, including those individuals who may claim a single racial identity or a colorblind perspective on identity (2). While scholars such as Nakashima and Dalmage use the term Mixed Race Movement or Multiracial Movement, this dissertation will follow Rainer Spencer’s foregrounding of the importance of identity choice within this movement by implanting the terms Mixed Race Identity Movement and Multiracial Identity Movement interchangeably.

While recent scholars working on the study of Millennial Mixed Race Identity have historicized the early Mixed Race Identity Movement, most of these accounts focus on three critical trajectories.<sup>89</sup> Firstly, the Mixed Race Identity Movement is often traced to a sudden “biracial baby boom”<sup>90</sup> in the 1970s and 1980s following the landmark repeal of antimiscegenation laws in 1967 with the Supreme Court’s *Loving v. Virginia* decision.<sup>91</sup> Secondly, the Mixed Race Identity Movement is often measured within the more complex historical context of mixed race identities such as the tragic mulatto trope, where there is a focus on a shift in perception of mixed race identities from tragic or malevolent to celebrated and advantaged.<sup>92</sup> Lastly, the Mixed Race Identity Movement is often contextualized with respect to the United States census and the American racial classification system.<sup>93</sup> Within each of these trajectories, recent scholarship has lambasted the Mixed Race Identity Movement for being too personally motivated finding this “first generation of academic writing on multiracialism” often filled with “very personal, individual-level, identitarian perspective[s].”<sup>94</sup> The new generation of

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<sup>89</sup> Note this is not these are not the same three trajectories that we discussed in the Introduction in relation to the rise of Millennial Mixed Race Identity. They are related but slightly different since this is a discussion of the Mixed Race Identity Movement.

<sup>90</sup> We discussed *Loving v. Virginia* in the Introduction in relation to the rise of Millennial Mixed Race Identity more generally. Root (1996) xv.

<sup>91</sup> An example of the centrality of the *Loving* decision is depicted through the annual Loving Day celebrations held across the United States that celebrate interracial couples and families and seek “connection between multiracial communities” ([www.lovingday.org](http://www.lovingday.org)). See also Root [1996], Daniel (2001) 106, Dalmage (2004) 1, and DaCosta (2007) 86; for a critique of the centrality of *Loving* see Spencer (2006).

<sup>92</sup> See Nakashima in Root’s *The Multiracial Experience* (1996), Spencer (2011) 35, Spencer (2004) 104-106.

<sup>93</sup> See Root (1996) xvii, Daniel (2001), DaCosta (2007) 40-44, Goldberg (1995) 239-240, Fernandez (1996) 20-21.

<sup>94</sup> In a recent talk given on April 20, 2015 at the Asian/Pacific/American Institute at NYU entitled “What’s Radical About ‘Mixed Race?’” Ann Morning, an Associate Professor of Sociology at NYU, discusses the way in which a new generation of scholars on multiracialism are “pushing us to move beyond” what she sees as the “first generation of academic writing on

scholars<sup>95</sup> has critiqued the Mixed Race Identity Movement and encouraged broader perspectives on mixed race studies and Millennial Mixed Race Identity through attention to gender, sexuality, racial hierarchy, and racial essentialism.

Although extremely important to broaden the scope of our understandings of mixed race studies and Millennial Mixed Race Identity through these perspectives, the dismissiveness of personal motivations and individual-level perspectives has caused a missed opportunity to understand an integral history of the formation of mixed race identities at the turn of the millennium. Recent scholarship and the attending critical trajectories listed above tend to circle around a core of identity politics that comprehends the Mixed Race Identity Movement as a racial project that attempts to destabilize the dominant definitions of race and racial categories, but actually continues to maintain the racial structure of the United States insofar as they rely upon, and naturalize, existing social constructions of race. Many of these accounts have ignored the more intimate and personal desires of individuals fighting for these identity choices due to recent scholarship's purposeful distance from the "personal, individual level identitarian perspective[s]" of the "first generation scholars" involved in the Mixed Race Identity Movement. This disregard of the personal and intimate motivations behind identity choice produces a wasted opportunity to uncover the complications that arise from the Movement's politics of recognition, specifically, what it means to appeal to the state to resolve affective conditions.

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multiracialism" that oftentimes had a "very personal, individual-level identitarian perspective." See video entitled "What's Radical about 'Mixed Race'?" on *YouTube*.

<sup>95</sup> In her talk at the Asian/Pacific/American Institute at NYU on April 20, 2015 Ann Morning distinguishes a "new generation of scholars" working on mixed race who are helping to "build on that [the academic writing of a first generation of scholars that is considered too personally motivated], to consider multiracialism as a political project" asking us to see multiracialism as "a racial project where multiracialism serves or, at least, leads to particular political ends whether deliberately or unwittingly."

The Mixed Race Identity Movement is preoccupied with state-sponsored recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identities. In the contemporary politics of recognition, one of the underlying and universally accepted notions is that identity is formulated through our relation to those around us.<sup>96</sup> In other words, intimate relations and the feelings produced from those encounters inform our construction of identity. A feeling is understood as a personal “sensation” that is informed by one’s own history of interpretations and experiences. In distinction, emotion is understood as a social display of feeling.<sup>97</sup> For the purposes of this argument, both emotion and feeling can be grouped under the larger category of affect; however, affect is not to be conflated with emotion or feeling. Affect is what transmits between bodies (inanimate or animate), or between a body and the world, when emotions are projected and feelings are felt.<sup>98</sup> Since recognition and identity formation are so intrinsically connected to affect it becomes critical to investigate the Mixed Race Identity Movement’s preoccupation with a politics of recognition from the perspective of affect. Investigating the Mixed Race Identity Movement with an attention to affect will: reveal the complications of looking to the state to solve affective states; uncover the ways in which the power of race threatens positions of kinship; and,

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<sup>96</sup> As will be discussed more in depth later, one of Hegel’s assumptions from the master/slave narrative that continues to inform the politics of recognition is that identities are formed through social interactions with other subjects. See Charles Taylor’s *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (1994) and Coulthard’s *Red Skins White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (2014) for discussions of Hegel’s dialectic in relation to recognition.

<sup>97</sup> See Shouse (2005).

<sup>98</sup> This dissertation understands emotion and feeling to fall under a larger category of affect. Following from Shouse and Massumi, affect is understood as an abstract intensity that passes between bodies—how bodies (inanimate and animate) affect one another and are affected by those around them (Massumi). Thus, affect is not exactly conflated with emotion or feeling; rather, affect is what transpires between two bodies as emotions are projected and feelings are felt.

ultimately, depict how embracing the failure of racial identity can potentially alter the power of the state to determine personhood and racial citizenship.

Looking at some of the key texts of the Mixed Race Identity Movement, this chapter will bring attention to the Mixed Race Identity Movement's problematic investment in the state to solve affective conditions and how race causes insecurities to surround even the most supposedly secure affective relationships of kinship. Rather than focusing on simply single "individual-level identitarian" experiences, this chapter will use a personal perspective to examine the more complex formations of political movements and identity. Examining the personal nature of these key texts, this chapter will focus on the affective nature of Millennial Mixed Race Identity formation at the turn of the millennium and its influence over the political agendas within the Mixed Race Identity Movement; specifically, it will uncover the role of the private space of emotion and feeling in the public space of the census debates; it will elucidate the complexity of identity formations by demonstrating the integral relationship between feelings of self-worth, pride, and dignity with the recognition of particular identities and identity choices; it will unearth the attempts to reconcile feelings through state-sponsored recognition of identity and the problems of such a desired reconciliation. While there have been a number of critiques against the Mixed Race Identity Movement, individuals who no longer see themselves as a part of the Mixed Race Identity Movement continue to desire mixed race identity choices into the new millennium. Although there has been a shift away from demanding state-sponsored recognition of millennial mixed race identities, comprehending the role affect plays in these identity choices will elucidate the continued desire for other forms of recognition for mixed race identities into the millennium, even as these identities may work against the deconstructive goals they set out to pursue and/or are shown to be asserted at the expense of other identities. It is worth investigating

these millennial mixed race identity choices because as the United States continues to shift its demographic makeup towards a more ethnically and racially diverse majority, and intermarriage and mixing between the standardized racial groups continues, it is becoming clear that these demographic shifts will not result in a “post-racial” society.

In order to investigate these identity choices and the investments in state-sponsored recognition made by the Mixed Race Identity Movement, it is critical to begin with one of the linchpins of the Mixed Race Identity Movement—the census debate over the addition of a multiracial category on the centennial census in 1997. During these hearings, many leaders and organizers of the grassroots organizations associated with the Mixed Race Identity Movement gave testimony before the Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology of the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight. Since the mid-1980s, these testimonies have been published in whole or in part in anthologies and newsletters centered on Millennial Mixed Race Identity<sup>99</sup> as foundations of the Mixed Race Identity Movement. This chapter will focus on two testimonies by arguably the two most prominent activists within the movement—the “Statement of Ramona E. Douglass, President of the Association of MultiEthnic Americans, Member of the Federal 2000 Census Advisory Committee” and the “Statement of Susan Graham, Executive Director, Project RACE, Inc.”<sup>100</sup> During the census debates, these two women represented two “major blocks of interest within the multiracial community” as heads of the two largest lobbying organizations.<sup>101</sup> While Susan

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<sup>99</sup> See Fernandez (1996) 28, and Graham (1996) 37-48 in Root’s anthology *The Multiracial Experience*; see Fernandez (1995) in Naomi Zack’s *American Mixed Race*; see *The Multiracial Activist* (May 1997).

<sup>100</sup> All statements can be found at [TheMultiracialActivist.com](http://TheMultiracialActivist.com)

<sup>101</sup> Ramona Douglass in her essay “Evolution of the Multiracial Movement” recognizes the importance of her role as AMEA’s president, as well as that of Susan Graham and PROJECT



Graham and Project RACE endorsed a single multiracial identifier option on the census form, AMEA led by Ramona Douglass argued for a multiple-check option.<sup>102</sup> Representing the two major perspectives within the Mixed Race Identity Movement, the testimonies of these two women serve as exceptionally good representations of the political concerns of the Mixed Race Identity Movement en masse. Simultaneously, while Graham is a white European American woman and the mother of a mixed race family, Douglass is herself a woman who claims a multiracial identity; in this sense, these women also represent two of the major types of individuals with personal investments in the Mixed Race Identity Movement. Testimonies, such as the representations chosen here, demonstrate the major political and, more importantly for this dissertation, the personal concerns of the Mixed Race Identity Movement; thus, these testimonies may help to elucidate some of the affective<sup>103</sup> aspects of the movement and highlight the complications that arise from a political agenda that attempts to reconcile affective states through government recognition.

In addition to these important testimonies, this chapter will also investigate one of the foundational academic pieces from the Mixed Race Identity Movement—Maria P.P. Root’s “A Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People” published in her anthology *The Multiracial Experience* in 1996. The manuscript is adapted from an earlier keynote address given at the Second Annual California Statewide Multiracial Conference at UC Santa Barbara in 1994.<sup>104</sup> Although Root

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RACE. She notes that the two formed “alliances of necessity” during the struggle over the centennial census, which would end over “ideological differences” in 1997 at the Third Multiracial Leadership Conference in Oakland.

<sup>102</sup> See Williams-Leon (2003) 167.

<sup>103</sup> The term “emotion” here refers to a social projection of one’s feelings. The term “affect” here refers to a more abstract idea of what makes a person “feel” a specific feeling; it is what has the power to influence feeling. See Shouse.

<sup>104</sup> See Author’s Note Root (1996) 3.

never mentions her own racial identity, her biography indicates that she was born in the Philippines and raised in Los Angeles; she often speaks of her place between racial borders and she is well known for her two anthologies on Millennial Mixed Race Identity. Significantly, due to Root's background as a licensed psychologist, Root's writings on mixed race tend to focus on the psychological aspects of millennial mixed race identity including how living along the borders of race affects individuals<sup>105</sup> and how racial identity is developed for mixed race individuals.<sup>106</sup> Root's "Bill of Rights" is one of the foundational texts in Mixed Race academic work. For many early activists and scholars, this manuscript put into published words many of the thoughts and articulations expressed by numerous others. As a central text for the early Mixed Race Identity Movement, the "Bill of Rights" becomes a critical point for examining the feelings and aspirations that drove many of the early members of this movement to seek out the state to resolve their affective complaints.

Scholars in Critical Mixed Race Studies<sup>107</sup> have critiqued the Mixed Race Identity Movement for its insistence of the inclusion of mixed race tabulation on the census from a variety of perspectives. Some recent critics have argued that including mixed race as a category for identification works to reinforce aspects of racial essentialism because the very idea of mixed race identity depends on the notion that race is hereditary and passed down from one generation to the next—one identifies as mixed race because one's parents identify as two different races. Thus, mixed race identity supports the notion that race is biological rather than socially

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<sup>105</sup> See Root's "Introduction" to her anthology *The Multiracial Experience* (1996).

<sup>106</sup> See Root "Racial Identity Development and Persons of Mixed Race Heritage" in *The Multiracial Child Resource Book: Living Complex Identities* (2003) 34-41.

<sup>107</sup> Critical Mixed Race Studies is a newly developing area of study that has grown out of Ethnic Studies and Critical Race Theory, and which has specifically developed in reaction to the Mixed Race Identity Movement of the 1980s. See the Introduction in this dissertation for a more detailed definition.

constructed.<sup>108</sup> Along similar logic, identifying as mixed race is not only dependent upon a belief in biological notions of race but also completely reliant upon heterosexual procreation—a person identifies as mixed race because they are the biological offspring of a man and a woman who identify as different races.<sup>109</sup> In this way, critics have noted that a mixed race category reinforces heteronormativity. Further entrenching itself in heteronormativity, the Mixed Race Identity Movement itself promotes “a (sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit) repackaged family values platform—extolling *bourgeois* virtues of domestic coupling, two-parent childrearing, and the nuclear family unit.”<sup>110</sup> Along with racial essentialism and heteronormativity, critics have also argued that the Mixed Race Identity Movement participates in a politics of antiblackness.<sup>111</sup> By expanding the racial paradigm to include mixed race, the movement does nothing to challenge the existing racial hierarchy; in fact, it continues to uphold the power and predominance of racial whiteness and subordination of blackness as more categories are created as buffers between whiteness and blackness. The movement also fails to acknowledge the “elasticity and expansiveness” of whiteness—how it consumes certain

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<sup>108</sup> Spencer (2006) argues that any claim to multiracial identity expresses belief in biological race: “Multiracial people can come into being only via the sexual reproduction of two progenitors of different biological races. To assert that one is multiracial is to assert that one is the biological child or the further-removed biological descendent of two persons of different racial groups” (13). Also see Spencer (2011).

<sup>109</sup> This is an argument made most notably by Jared Sexton in *Amalgamation Schemes: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiracialism* (2008).

<sup>110</sup> See Sexton (2008) 1.

<sup>111</sup> Antiblackness is a term used by Jared Sexton (2008) and Rainer Spencer (2010) in their critiques against multiracialism. Spencer in *Reproducing Race: The Paradox of Generation Mix* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010) distinguishes antiblackness from denial of blackness (141). Antiblackness can be understood as a disdain for blackness with a privileging eye towards whiteness (140). Within the multiracial discourse, antiblackness can be exemplified in the privileging of whiteness as a superior pure entity, while blackness is positioned as its opposition with the ability to corrupt by association with blackness (121).

racialized others (Jews, Irish, Southern Italians, and, now, Asians and Latinos) while continually distancing itself from blackness.<sup>112</sup>

While critics have argued that the Mixed Race Identity Movement participates in an antiblack, heteronormative, and racial essentialist politics and supporters have addressed the sociological and psychological arguments in defense of such a mixed race census category, neither side has approached the testimonies nor the “Bill of Rights” from the perspective of affect theory. Many of these foundational texts, including Root’s “Bill of Rights” and the testimonies given at the census hearings center on people who want to identify as mixed race, but feel impeded from doing so in our society. At the core, these texts express and/or attempt to resolve a feeling of indignation that derives from a perceived impediment from attaining the desired recognition of a mixed race identity. As previously mentioned, a feeling is understood as a personal “sensation” that is informed by one’s own history of interpretations and experiences. In distinction, emotion is understood as a social display of feeling.<sup>113</sup> By considering these texts in relation to feeling and emotion, we can begin to consider the way in which a journey driven by feeling and emotion may serve as an important facet in understanding how theories of affect work in relation to recognition and self-worth within the Mixed Race Identity Movement. It is important to note here that this attention to affect is not likely to trouble the heteronormative, white supremacist underpinnings of the movement. In fact, understanding the Mixed Race Identity Movement in relation to feelings and emotions and their relationship to identity choice and recognition may only offer a means to understand the continued investments in identities that are heteronormative, antiblack, and racially essentialist. Simultaneously, however, it will offer a

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<sup>112</sup> See Sexton (2008) 193 and Spencer (2010) 109-110.

<sup>113</sup> See Shouse (2005).

chance to understand the complications that arise from a politics built upon affect and the resolution of affective states.

Despite the fact that attention to affect may not categorically unsettle the problematic underpinnings of the movement, attention to affect can uncover the motives behind the movement's preoccupation with state-sponsored recognition of mixed race identity. Identity and recognition have become inextricably intertwined within the contemporary discourse of multiculturalism; therefore, it is not astonishing that the Mixed Race Identity Movement focuses its aim on garnering recognition of mixed race identities. According to Charles Taylor, this embedded association between recognition and identity occurred in two historical shifts: first, the collapse of social hierarchies shifted emphasis away from a preferential code of honor where only certain individuals were afforded honor based on their social standing to a more egalitarian and democratic entitlement of dignity;<sup>114</sup> second, the burgeoning understanding of individualized identity accompanied by an ideal of authenticity weakened the importance of socially derived identities and strengthened the notion that identity was formulated inwardly.<sup>115</sup> Taylor indicates that identity is always formed through interpersonal relations with significant others and their recognition on the intimate plane.<sup>116</sup> Although he notes a dialogic element between the public

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<sup>114</sup> See Taylor's *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (1994) for a more detailed explanation of the first historical shift that led to the close association between identity and recognition. Taylor argues that the collapse of social hierarchies led to a shift in importance from honor, which was preferential, to dignity, which is egalitarian and universal. Rather than only certain individuals deserving honor, now everyone is entitled to equal recognition. This "politics of equal recognition, which has taken various forms over the years, and has now returned in the form of demands for the equal status of cultures and of genders" (27).

<sup>115</sup> See Taylor for a more detailed account of the way in which the ideal of authenticity came to influence identity (28-32).

<sup>116</sup> According to Taylor (1994): "We define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us. Even after we outgrow some

and private spheres by suggesting individual identity is semi-bound to public recognition, he continues to isolate the recognition of interpersonal relations from recognition on the social plane where he believes a politics of difference has led to an increased expectation of equal recognition of unique identities by glossing over the affective ties that bind these two spheres.<sup>117</sup> Rather than considering the intimate and social planes as separate dimensions or glossing over the significance of individual feelings, an attention to affect can elucidate the ways in which the intimate and public spheres are, in fact, deeply intertwined. Specifically, this attention can illuminate the private motivations behind the public desire for recognition of millennial mixed race identity in the Mixed Race Identity Movement.

Examining the key texts of the Mixed Race Identity Movement, it becomes apparent that affect, identity, and recognition are all intimately entwined. The texts express and/or attempt to resolve a personal feeling of indignation that derives from a perceived impediment to attaining the desired recognition of a millennial mixed race identity by the state, and, thus, from the dominant culture more broadly. One of the ways in which the feeling of indignation can be identified within the foundational texts of the Mixed Race Identity Movement is in relation to notions of respect/disrespect that surface in the testimonies themselves. Theorists of multiculturalism, such as Charles Taylor, link feelings of respect directly to recognition. He notes that in circumstances where the dominant culture fails to grant recognition to a particular minority group or misrecognizes that group, there is a lack of respect being demonstrated towards that minority population.<sup>118</sup> This relationship between respect and recognition that

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of these others—our parents, for instance—and they disappear from our lives, the conversation with them continues within us as long as we live" (33).

<sup>117</sup> Taylor 36, 38.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid 26.

Taylor identifies is apparent within the testimonies of Ramona E. Douglass and Susan Graham presented during the census debates; in these testimonies issues of respect and disrespect are central to their pleas for the right to self-identify as mixed race.

In her testimony, Ramona E. Douglass aligns the issue of respect to acknowledgment of people who wish to identify as mixed race. She says, “In June, 1993, my personal testimony was submitted before a similar congressional subcommittee that was charged with exploring the possibility of acknowledging, counting and respecting multiracial/multiethnic people.” It becomes evident that for Douglass “respect” is directly linked to tabulation, to the right to be counted as mixed race, and the state-sponsored recognition of such an identity. She explicitly says, “give us the same consideration and respect you would demand for your own families’ health and well-being. Please count us, track us, begin the process of including us in the American framework that has monitored the evolution and growth of other racial/ethnic populations throughout our history.” In a society, like the United States, where racial identity is often foregrounded, state-sponsored recognition of racial identities becomes explicitly tied to notions of self-respect. Since its foundation, race and the differentiation of racial identities have always been a major part of the American psyche. Historically, racial identity was used as a means to subjugate certain bodies through processes of dehumanization. For example, blacks were dehumanized through the American slave system and sold as property with the assistance of the state; in this process, blackness (which becomes ascribed to certain physical features and associated with particular mental (in)capabilities) was considered inferior to whiteness. Similarly, Native Americans experienced a process of dehumanization that enabled genocide and theft of land in the project of settler colonialism; natives were deemed savages and positioned as inferior to civilized European Americans; again, certain characteristics become associated with

nativeness as inferior and whiteness as superior which were reflected in citizenship status and rights by the state.<sup>119</sup> Over time, as these racist beliefs became more and more deeply imbedded within the American psyche, racialized groups also internalized some of these racist beliefs growing to loathe certain characteristics of their otherness. Overcoming this racist self-hatred became a major point within the ethnic power movements of the 1960s and 1970s where mantras such as “Black is Beautiful” or “Native Pride” became central. As different racial groups within the ethnic power movements exposed the institutional racism they faced at the hands of the federal government and sought reparations or the restoration of never-relinquished sovereignty from the state, these movements demonstrated the deep connection between state-sponsored recognition of racial identity and self-pride.

This racial history of the United States shows how racial identity was used to degrade and dehumanize certain bodies and demonstrates the long-standing connections between state-sponsored recognition of racial identity and self-respect. With this history in mind, it becomes clear that our identities are deeply informed by “recognition and its absence.”<sup>120</sup> Therefore, there can be real consequences when a group or person is denied recognition or misrecognized.<sup>121</sup> This denial or misrecognition can cause “a grievous wound, saddling its victims with a crippling self-hatred.”<sup>122</sup> Taylor’s understanding of the manner by which the absence of recognition can cause feelings of self-hatred, suggests the contrasting way in which recognition produces feelings of self-love and self-respect. Thus, Douglass’s demand for respect through state-sponsored tabulation can be understood as a means to produce and secure feelings of self-love

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<sup>119</sup> See Patrick Wolfe’s essay “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native” published in the *Journal of Genocide Research* (2006).

<sup>120</sup> Taylor 25.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid

<sup>122</sup> Taylor 26.



for individuals who wish to identify as mixed race following an established trajectory of state-sponsored recognition.

In a society like the United States, where state-sponsored recognition of race and racial identity have become foregrounded, Douglass's petition for recognition of millennial mixed race identities carries with it some major trappings. Historically, state-sponsored recognition of mixed race identities has been used to further projects of racial domination in the United States such as slavery and colonialism where for natives this racial domination has a genocidal intent.<sup>123</sup> With this history in mind, it is important to distinguish the absence of recognition of millennial mixed race identity from other historical instances of the absence of recognition, or state-defined recognition (for example, through blood quantum), that have caused very real and lasting material damages to certain racial groups in the United States. For instance, Native populations denied recognition in the project of settler colonialism had their populations decimated and lands stolen and African American populations continue to grapple with the lasting affects of self-hatred, and antiblack violence of all kinds, inflicted from racism. Furthermore, Douglass's contemporary desire for state-sponsored recognition only further entrenches these types of race-based determinations in the national psyche and bolsters the power of the state to classify its populous in racial terms and control access to resources such as land and wealth. And lastly, Douglass's demand for state-sponsored recognition of millennial mixed race identities only serves to expand the system of racial categorization to include mixed

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<sup>123</sup> This point will be discussed in depth later in this chapter. For now, it is important to note that the mixed race identity of the mulatto was used to increase slave populations and the mixed race identity of the half-breed was used to decrease Native populations in the project of white colonial domination. See Patrick Wolfe's essay "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native" published in the *Journal of Genocide Research* (2006).

race; it does not work to dismantle the use of racial distinction or racial hierarchy in the United States.

Despite the ways in which state-sponsored recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity may further cement racial difference in the United States, Douglass and the Mixed Race Identity Movement continue to perceive this avenue as the primary access point for self-possession, self-respect, and pride for individuals who identify as mixed race. In her testimony, Douglass goes on to state that “[t]he children of America deserve a future that finally lives up to the promise of serving each and every member of society with dignity honor and respect.” Again Douglass correlates the issue of mixed race identification to a matter of respect, but she also goes further in connecting state-sponsored recognition to a feeling of dignity. In her wish for the future, Douglass suggests that the right to be counted as one desires is also a means by which that individual can attain a feeling of dignity; in other words, tabulation generates self-possession, self-respect, and pride for an individual. By demanding a future where dignity is available to individuals who identify as mixed race, Douglass suggests that the current racial climate does not offer this feeling to all members equally. In a society where racial difference is encoded into the very fabric of daily life; race and racial identity are used in everyday encounters to classify and make assumptions about the people we interact with even on a subconscious level.<sup>124</sup> In an everyday encounter, a person often assigns another unknown body racial identity based on physical appearance and racial stereotypes; thus, bodies that are racially ambiguous are often miscategorized. According to perspectives like Douglass’, since mixed race has not been established as a dominant racial category via state-sponsored recognition, people who may identify as such are often miscategorized into one of the commonly recognized racial groups. As

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<sup>124</sup> See Omi and Winant (1994).

previously mentioned, miscategorization can lead to a feeling of disrespect and a loss of self-possession;<sup>125</sup> rather than possessing the power to choose one's own (mixed race) identity, race is (mis)assigned by those in positions of power to ascribe racial meaning to these particular ambiguously raced bodies. In this sense, misrecognition of identity "can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being."<sup>126</sup> In opposition, self-identifying as mixed race can act as a means to power by taking away the power of ascribing racial meaning from the viewer and placing it back into the hands of the racialized subject, thus, generating a feeling of both self-possession and self-respect. By imagining the "promise" of feelings of respect and dignity in a future where mixed race identification is accepted and counted, Douglass implies that the current politics of identity do not grant self-possession and respect to those who wish to identify in such a way.

Significantly, Douglass's desire for self-possession through the tabulation of mixed race identity neglects to consider the very real oppressions of certain racial classifications, especially those classifications that have always already included racial mixture due to the one-drop-rule and blood quantum laws. She does acknowledge that not all individuals of the community she is fighting for agree on the collective identity of multiracial.<sup>127</sup> However, she does not seem to recognize the precise ways in which the racial groups involved in a particular individual's racial mixture may matter in terms of identity choice, as well as access to dignity and honor beyond the right to self-identify; nor does she recognize the real material losses and gains of certain racial

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<sup>125</sup> See Taylor (1994) 26.

<sup>126</sup> Taylor (1994) 25.

<sup>127</sup> In her essay "The Evolution of the Multiracial Movement," Douglass acknowledges that many "multiracial and multiethnic Americans, unlike those who choose to identify solely as one race, remain unsure about whether or not to embrace their collective identity." She attributes this to the differences in the way hypodescent works within certain mixtures versus others.

classifications including those classifications that have always been mixed (African Americans and Native Americans). Douglass claims in her statement during the Hearing on Multiracial Identification that, “The American Multiracial Movement is about choice not force in racial and ethnic identification,” and recognizes the critiques against the movement that claim that the “multiracial” identity is a “flight from blackness” or a “colored buffer group” between minority groups and whiteness. She even acknowledges the growth in intermarriage rates for Asian-Americans/whites and their increase over black/white intermarriages. However, her acknowledgment of these increased intermarriage rates and critiques do not seem to reconcile with each other. One of the major critiques of the agenda of the Mixed Race Identity Movement, from theorist Rainer Spencer, specifically points to the increase of Asian American/white intermarriages and mixed race identifications as a strategy of antiblackness.<sup>128</sup> Spencer argues that some Asians and Hispanics “are taking advantage of multiracialism to transition to a state of honorary whiteness.”<sup>129</sup> With this jostling toward whiteness, “Afro-Americans are seen as the group to avoid.”<sup>130</sup>

Furthermore, while the movement may be about racial choice for elites like Douglass, Douglass does not seem to acknowledge the ways in which some individuals may not have a choice about their identity: the perseverance of the one-drop-rule may make identity very different for an individual who is mixed black/Asian or black/white and one who is mixed Asian/white, or Hispanic/white; the power of visual racial ascription may deny a dark-skinned

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<sup>128</sup> Spencer (2010).

<sup>129</sup> In *Reproducing Race* Rainer Spencer argues, “As in the case with some Asians, many Hispanics are taking advantage of multiracialism to transition to a state of honorary whiteness, a phenomenon whose corollary is that, once again, Afro-Americans are seen as the group to avoid” (5).

<sup>130</sup> Ibid 5.

black/white individual the choice of a millennial mixed race identity while it allows a light-skinned black/white individual that very same choice; and the necessity of tribal inclusion for access to land rights may influence a mixed Native-American/white or Native-American/black individual to make a very different choice about their identity in order to gain access to land and resources. In this sense, not only does the type of mixture matter in terms of being able to choose a millennial mixed race identity, but choosing a millennial mixed race identity may also support investments in dominant ideologies of race and racial hierarchy. In some cases, mixed race identity may not be an advantage; for example, native populations have struggled against blood quantum laws that used mixed race in the project of settler colonialism to decimate tribal numbers and steal land away from native peoples. And, in other cases, identity is not a choice. Some people do not have the luxury to contemplate their identities. On the one hand, racial identity may be assigned based on appearance. On the other hand, the struggle of daily survival may trump all notions of identity and choosing a racial identity may lose all value when an individual is faced with the material realities of poverty, violence, or lack of education.

Related to the way in which Ramona Douglass associates mixed race identification with respect, Susan Graham of Project Race, Inc. goes further by directly suggesting that state-sponsored recognition of millennial mixed race identities are a matter of power and existence for individuals who identify as mixed race. For Graham, respect of millennial mixed race identities through government recognition is related to one's existence in two distinct ways: recognition of the actual existence of individuals who identify as mixed race and the reality of positions of intimate relations (specifically her position as mother in a mixed race kinship system). While Graham seems to be fighting for respect of a public mixed race community, her statement also suggests a connection with the more private sphere of family and the relationship between affect,

mixed race identity, and the racialization of kinship.<sup>131</sup> In this sense, along with the way in which Douglass demonstrates how feelings of self-worth can drive individuals to unite under the banner of the Mixed Race Identity Movement, Graham's plea illustrates that an attention to affect also depicts how the power of race trumps positions of kinship and complicates the gendered assumptions of kinship structures. When these intimate positions are called into question, the Mixed Race Identity Movement has sought out the state to publicly recognize and validate even the most intimate (and supposedly secure) relations.

Susan Graham links respect, through government recognition of millennial mixed race identity, to power and one's existence in two distinct ways: on the one hand, Graham calls for the recognition of the existence of actual individuals who claim a mixed race identity (her children). For Graham, existence is only made possible through the government recognition of an all-inclusive multiracial identity. In her view, the government's response of permitting a "check all that apply" option for racial identity on the census is tantamount to denying the existence of multiracial identity. In her argument, the "check all that apply" option only recognizes people who identify as mixed race as parts of other communities; these individuals are never recognized or allowed to exist as "whole" persons in their own community.<sup>132</sup> Similar

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<sup>131</sup> Following from Kimberly McClain DaCosta in her essay "All in the Family: The Familial Roots of Racial Division," the "racialization of kinship" refers to the two part process of the "racialization of the family" and the "familization of race" (20). DaCosta defines the "racialization of the family" as the process by which "racial premises came to be buried in our understandings of family, in which genetic/phenotypic sharing is coded to signify cultural sharing, intimacy, and caring" (20). DaCosta explains the "familization of race" as "how members of the same racial group feel a kin-like connection and how that familial understanding is used politically" (20).

<sup>132</sup> Graham states: "You must understand that the proposal in effect says multiracial persons are only part of other communities. They are not whole. When I was in school one-half plus one-half equaled a whole. I think it still does – unless you are multiracial." She continues to repeat that

to Douglass, this aspect of Graham's imploration demonstrates the way in which feelings of self-worth and power drive the Mixed Race Identity Movement's fight for recognition of mixed race identity; but Graham further insists on recognition as a means to validate one's existence. In her testimony in the Hearing on Multiracial Identification, Graham makes a very personal plea. She states: "Please take my children's multiracial identity seriously. Show respect for them and the fact that they DO belong to a community. It is important and it is very, very real." Graham beseeches her audience to demonstrate "respect" for her own children, and other children who want to identify as multiracial, by allowing these children to identify in such a way. For Graham, the identity of her children as multiracial must be acknowledged by the government to be made "real." Her imploration denotes that without the acknowledgment of these children's identities as mixed race/multiracial society is, in fact, denying their very actuality; these children do not exist in the eyes of the state.

The notion of "being seen by the state" is crucial to an individual's actuality because historically the government of the United States has performed such a critical role in constituting particular bodies as human while excluding other bodies from the category of humanity. Race and racial categories have been inextricably linked to this process of determining personhood. Graham repeatedly links the "existence" of an individual to government recognition and tabulation of that particular individual. She reiterates throughout her statement: "the message should be very clear: ***Multiracial children exist and the Federal government recognizes them***" (emphasis original). For Graham, and others in the Mixed Race Identity Movement, government recognition of people who want to identify as mixed race is supremely significant because it is

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the government must give the message that: "Multiracial children exist and the Federal government recognizes them." See Graham's Statement at *TheMultiracialActivist.com*.

precisely government legislation that has historically denied and/or quantified the very existence of people who could identify as mixed race or be marked as such. For Native Americans, government legislation was employed in what Patrick Wolfe calls an exclusive taxonomy of racialization; blood quantum was exploited to dispossess native peoples of their land in the project of settler colonialism.<sup>133</sup> Thus, race was and continues to be deployed by the United States government in conjunction with tabulation to diminish the numbers of Native people. In opposition, in the case of African Americans, the “One Drop Rule” has been employed by the U.S. government and white slave/land owners to increase the slave labor force.<sup>134</sup> And in more recent history, Jim Crow laws in the early 1900s established antimiscegenation laws that prohibited interracial relationships and, thus, made the offspring of these liaisons “in the eyes of the law, illegitimate.”<sup>135</sup> Since the United States government has played such an active role in legislating, constituting, quantifying, and denying race, racial identities, and interracial relationships in the past, it is no surprise that Graham and others in the Mixed Race Identity Movement seek out government recognition and tabulation in their plea for the recognition of millennial mixed race identification. Due to the fact that the Mixed Race Identity Movement is not seeking any real material gains—access to land, rights to certain resources, etc.—but instead those within the movement are seeking to make visible affective connections between parents and children, as well as the affective resolution of “correct” identification for those children; rather than denying the government the right to create and control race, many of the prominent

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<sup>133</sup> See Patrick Wolfe’s essay “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native” published in the *Journal of Genocide Research* (2006).

<sup>134</sup> Patrick Wolfe refers to this type of racialization as an inclusive taxonomy, whereby one-drop of black blood perpetuated the enslavement of the offspring of slaves and landowners (387).

<sup>135</sup> See Carlos Fernandez’s essay “Historical Government Classification of Multiracial/Multiethnic People” in *The Multiracial Experience* (1996) 22.



activists in the Mixed Race Identity Movement continue to inadvertently support heteronormativity and racial hierarchy.<sup>136</sup> Rather than using the failure of recognition by the government to offer a counterhegemonic perspective on identity and kinship, the Mixed Race Identity Movement seeks out the state as a means to solve affective issues (not feeling respected or no feeling that they exist in the eyes of the state); thus, bolstering the power of the state to determine race, identity, and citizenship and even now, as we will see in the following paragraphs, to legislate kinship.

As Graham claims the actuality of individuals who identify as mixed race is directly tied to government recognition of a millennial mixed race identity, Graham also links state-sponsored recognition of millennial mixed race identities to existence in another way. For Graham, government recognition also secures the existence of her position as mother and partner in an interracial relationship. Not only does this aspect of Graham's imploration elucidate the ways in which feelings of kinship and kin relations can influence decisions about identity, more importantly, Graham's plea depicts the way in which even the most intimate and supposedly secure relationships (positions of kinship) become threatened in the face of the power of race. The denial of a person's identity as mixed race has a twofold consequence for Graham: first, it refuses existence to the individual who would claim the mixed race identity (as explored in the previous paragraph); and, secondly, in a society like the United States where kinship is assumed

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<sup>136</sup> Scholars like Charles A. Gallagher point to the ways in which the boundaries of whiteness are expanding to include certain racial mixtures while excluding others. He points to the way in which individuals of Asian/white and Latino/white racial heritage are actually being included within the broadening category of whiteness (61). Rainer Spencer also makes this critique with his notion of "honorary whiteness" in *Reproducing Race: The Paradox of Generation Mix* (2010). Spencer argues that racialized status becomes more closely related to ethnic identity for individuals with Asian/white heritage who claim a mixed race identity and, thus, these individuals are permitted access to the category and status of whiteness (110).

to follow monoracial and heteronormative structures, it also threatens to deny the reality of this individual's family unit as mixed race; thus, the relationships and positions within this particular mixed race kinship system become obfuscated. Interlocked with the identity of the children Graham appeals for in her speech is also the realness of Graham's position as their mother. The denial of these children's identities as mixed race simultaneously seems to threaten even those relationships that would appear to be the most secure; it negates the reality and security of Graham's own position as her children's mother and the existence of her interracial relationship.

Graham's plight for the recognition of her position as mother depicts the power that race has to publicly call into question the security of the most private affective relations. In the United States race and sexuality have been forcefully policed and legislated in regards to family and kinship. Most obviously, antimiscegenation laws have legislated the parameters of American families. More latently, though, along with the dominance of the heteronormative family unit in the United States, historically, the "family is [also] thought of as a monoracial institution."<sup>137</sup> Although the last few decades has seen a broadening definition of the family unit as mixed race through the visibility of interracial families on television and other media outlets, historically, the notion of the family as monoracial has permeated the psyche of the United States. In fact, it is often overlooked how conceptions of race and family are so intricately intertwined. Within the United States, the common perspective is that individuals are believed to be members of a family unit because they "look alike" and "looking alike is often interpreted to mean that one has the same phenotypic markers (hair texture, skin color, eye shape, etc.)."<sup>138</sup> The most recognizable

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<sup>137</sup> See Kimberly McClain DaCosta's article "All in the Family: The Familial Roots of Racial Division" in her book *Making Multiracials: State, Family, and Market in the Redrawing of the Color Line* (2007) 20.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid 22.

phenotypic markers are not only used to determine kinship; more significantly, these phenotypic markers have historically been used to classify bodies racially.<sup>139</sup> In fact, in a society, like the United States, where skin color has played such a significant role in assigning racial meaning to the bodies of its populous, this particular phenotypic marker becomes much more predominant in the American psyche and often renders other physical likeness invisible, especially if one is just quickly glancing at a group of people and not looking closely at the specific features of those individuals.

For Susan Graham, feelings of kinship and her position among her family become significant factors motivating her fight for recognition of mixed race identity precisely because of the way in which the family has been racialized in the United States. Without the acknowledgment of her children as multiracial (and thus, of her family as a multiracial unit), Graham's position as their mother is not recognized by the racializing eyes of the larger society. Graham may not be immediately (visually) recognizable as the mother of her children because of a difference in the phenotypical marker most closely associated with relationality and kinship—skin color. Graham's children may be considered part of the black community because of the legacy of the one-drop-rule and the power of visual racial ascription, while she is visually assigned a position as part of the white community. Without formal government recognition of millennial mixed race identities and families, the visibility of these families and the relationships among the kinship system may remain limited especially when looking at the collection of racial data in the sphere of medicine or education; but on a more general level, government legitimization of millennial mixed race identities and families may work to make the larger society more aware that these families exist, thus, Graham may become more readily recognizable as the

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<sup>139</sup> See Camper's use of the "facial angle" and the birth of scientific racism.

mother of her children. Without this state-sponsored recognition, the possibility for Graham to be instantly recognized as the mother of her children remains fragile. In this sense, her personal plea for “respect” of her children’s identities to be labeled as multiracial begins to push on the boundaries of embedded notions of American kinship and race.<sup>140</sup> However, rather than take this opportunity to truly expose the power that race has in our society—that it is so powerful it can call into question the very fact that a child was carried in your own body—Graham looks to the state and validates the power of race while, simultaneously, reinforcing the heteronormative ideals of family and notions of racial essentialism (descent) that have also been so deeply ingrained within the American psyche. Graham’s appeal for state-sponsored recognition of millennial mixed race identity highlights the very real ways in which emotion—the projection of her love for her children—and feeling—her feelings of insignificance at being unrecognizable as their mother—motivate her political agenda; but her plea to the government to resolve her affective state only serves to further cement the power that the state has to determine race, identity, and kinship in the United States.

Similar to Graham’s implorations, Maria P.P. Root in her “Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People” also connects the issue of recognizing millennial mixed race identification with issues of power and personhood demonstrating the way in which feelings of power and powerlessness and the recognition of certain identity choices influence the Mixed Race Identity Movement to seek out the state to solve its affective concerns. For Root, the denial of millennial

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<sup>140</sup> Kimberly McClain DaCosta’s article “All in the Family: The Familial Roots of Racial Division” argues that when people are confronted with an “interracial family” their ideas of what constitutes a “normal family” are challenged and their assumptions about the racialization of family are made explicit (22-23)

mixed race identity is a form of disenfranchisement—defined as a loss of power.<sup>141</sup> While her connection between fragmentation and disenfranchisement (lack of power) is not well articulated, her claim concerning fragmentation is a well-known complaint within the Mixed Race Identity Movement.<sup>142</sup> Root and others believe that the current racial politics in the United States force people who might identify as mixed race to assert only one part of their racial identities in specific situations or to identify as part of many different racial groups, rather than to identify as simply a (supposedly “whole”) mixed race identity.<sup>143</sup> For Root, “entrenched attitudes about race” lead to the forced fragmentation of one’s racial identity, which is, ultimately, a denial of power because these individuals are viewed as inferior and relegated to “object status, unconnected to humanity.”<sup>144</sup> While Root acknowledges that racial “boundaries and labels defining the disenfranchised by race shift over time,”<sup>145</sup> she considers these fluctuations in the racial classification system merely a means of maintaining the racialized social hierarchy. She believes that there are two groups at work in maintaining this racial hierarchy: the creators of the racial hierarchy (European/white Americans) and the oppressed who have internalized the “mechanics” of the system. Root argues the latter group is comprised of minority groups that insist on “singular ethnic or racial loyalties.”<sup>146</sup> Here, Root seems to

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<sup>141</sup> In her essay “A Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People” published in *The Multiracial Experience* (1996), Root claims that being required to “fragment myself” is to “unquestioningly be deployed to operate the machinery that disenfranchised myself, my family, my friends, and others I was yet to met” (3-4). Here, it seems she uses the term *disenfranchisement* to mean a loss of power.

<sup>142</sup> See Fulbeck (2006), O’Hearn (1998), Root (1996), Zack (1994).

<sup>143</sup> I discuss in another chapter the pitfalls of considering mixed race identity itself a “whole” identity.

<sup>144</sup> See Root’s “A Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People” published in *The Multiracial Experience* (1996) 3-4.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid 5.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid 5.

generalize racial groups and their intentions concerning people who might identify as mixed race. While she does acknowledge the history of racial mixing in groups such as African Americans, she is imprecise in discerning the ways in which groups demand racial loyalty that erases such mixtures. Regardless of her ambiguities, Root argues that both the oppressor (whites) and the subjugated (people of color) collude to oppress “multiracial people,”<sup>147</sup> leaving these individuals without the power to define their own racial identity. Root’s accusations do not specify the material means of oppression facing “multiracials,” other than the abstract fragmentation of racial identity and feelings that may accompany such questions of ethnic/racial authenticity. Her assertion, in fact, seems to diminish the significance of very real oppressions based on race that many people of color have, and continue, to face including some individuals who may (at times) identify as mixed race. In fact, it is her feelings—in this case, of oppression—that are at work here and not necessarily any material oppression. This is a significant distinction to be made in regards to the language of Root’s “Bill of Rights” because it has become such a focal point within the Mixed Race Identity Movement. In feeling oppressed, Root also feels disempowered; this feeling of powerlessness is what motivates her to declare her “Bill of Rights” and to fight for a millennial mixed race identification in which she believes she will feel power through self-determination.

Reminiscent of Graham’s point, Root’s language also suggests individuals who want to identify as mixed race are denied access to personhood. As previously mentioned, Root argues that “multiracial individuals” are relegated to “object status, unconnected to humanity.”<sup>148</sup> On

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<sup>147</sup> Root uses the term “multiracial people” in her work. I would like to point out that it would be more accurate to say “people who identify as mixed race” or “individuals who identify as mixed race.” These are the terms I have tried to use in this dissertation.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid 4.

the one hand, Root implies that since bodies are often judged within the embedded racial structure of the United States and assigned racial identities based on the visual perception of their racialized bodies, these bodies are relegated to “object status.” One way in which this objectification occurs is through the employment of terms such as “exotic” that are often engaged when speaking about such individuals as a means to “reduce discomfort” caused by their racial ambiguity.<sup>149</sup> Root argues that while terms such as *exotic* may seem benign, or even positive, they actually work to create “social distance” between the *exotic object* and its viewer.<sup>150</sup> It is precisely this social distance that Root argues is a strategy of dehumanization, and, thus, prevents these bodies from accessing aspects of personhood.<sup>151</sup>

Furthermore, Root argues that for a racially ambiguous body, “object status” is intensified; and, oftentimes, racial identity is “misdiagnosed.” For Root, the misdiagnosis of racial identity further perpetuates the oppressive and racist system of identification that requests fragmentation from individuals who identify as mixed race. As previously mentioned, Root argues that the manner by which race and racial categories are traditionally understood and deployed operates within a “mechanics of racism” that, ultimately, leads to the oppression of individuals who may identify as mixed race.<sup>152</sup> While Root may indeed point out the frustration that some individuals feel when questioned about their racial heritage or when “misdiagnosed” as a different race, her insistence that individuals’ capacities are “stifled”<sup>153</sup> by a racial system

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid 8-9.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid 9.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid 4. Root argues that the final stage in the *mechanics of oppression* is social distance. She continues by arguing, “data collected to rationalize the superiority of one group over another” is used as “rationalization” for social distance, which makes it easier to “depersonalize and dehumanize the group that is viewed as inferior.”

<sup>152</sup> Ibid 5.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid 5.

that requests an individual to “fit into just one [racial] category” seems to miss the mark just a bit. The idea that the racial system does real damage to individuals who desire a millennial mixed race identification by requiring monoracial identification or by (mis)assigning does not account for the material ways in which people are in reality, oftentimes, the victims of racism based on “monoracial” ascription to a group (i.e. African American, Native American, Asian American). Root’s belief in the damage done to individuals who desire a millennial mixed race identity also fails to point out the way in which the “misdiagnosis” of race actually perpetuates racism by using body parts as racial markers.

Along with objectification, Root also contends that people who want to identify as mixed race are denied access to personhood by being forced to justify their existence to the world. Root argues that “multiracial people” have historically been consigned a “deviant status,” have been seen as “mistakes,” have had their contributions to society minimized, or have had their existence ignored altogether.<sup>154</sup> In her complaint, Root neglects to give specific examples of how any of these offenses actually occur and fails to account for the alternate ways in which people who may identify as mixed race have also been seen as superior to other people of color. Historically, this has occurred as racial mixing was used in the project of settler colonialism; for example, “mulattoes” were, oftentimes, seen as superior to African slaves precisely because of their “white blood.” And, in contemporary times, people like Root, herself, view people who identify as mixed race in a positive position by crediting mixed race identity with having the potential to deconstruct our current notions of race.<sup>155</sup> Despite her failure to articulate these

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid 4.

<sup>155</sup> In her introduction to *The Multiracial Experience* (1996), Root argues that the growing number of “multiracial individuals are changing the face of America and the meaning and utility of race” (xiv).



offenses and account for her own objectification of people who may identify as mixed race, Root argues that people who identify as mixed race are constantly forced to justify their existence to the world. Root argues that this justification is requested when others ask questions like, “What are you?” or “How did your parents meet?”<sup>156</sup> Root is not specific about how these questions actually compel a justification of one’s existence. In fact, these questions are not about a justification of existence at all; but, rather, it is a justification of one’s body and an example of racial affect. Root suggests that the inquisitor is made uncomfortable by the presence of the ambiguous body and attempts to reconcile his/her confusion about the body’s proper place in the racial paradigm through a set of questions meant to elicit information regarding one’s racial heritage or ethnic makeup. Objectification of the ambiguous body occurs as the inquisitor views the body’s parts, attempts and fails to properly categorize the body in his/her racial schema, and has an affective response of discomfort based on this failed reconciliation. As the body is racially dissected and probed, the individual is denied a certain sense of power through the request for a stabilized and recognizable racial identity. The individual is made to justify their body by answering questions about their racial and ethnic heritage. While Root’s claim that people who identify as mixed race are constantly required to justify their existence to the world is a bit of a hyperbole, the inquisition meant to make meaning of an ambiguous body may indeed provoke feelings of indignation, feelings of powerlessness, and feelings of oppression.

With Root’s “Bill of Rights” we begin to parse out the intricacies of individual feelings and structural analysis. It must be distinguished that there is a difference between *feelings* of

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<sup>156</sup> See Root’s “A Bill of Rights” in *The Multiracial Experience* (1996). Root argues that people who identify as mixed race “do not fit neatly into the observer’s schema of reality” and questions such as “‘What are you?’ ‘How did your parents meet?’ and ‘Are your parents married?’ indicate the stereotypes that make up the schema by which the other attempts to make meaning of the multiracial person’s existence” (7).

powerlessness and *feelings* of being oppressed and the reality of the meaning of oppression and disenfranchisement. It is important to acknowledge the ways in which feelings can have material effects; in this case, feelings of disenfranchisement and oppression can lead to a belief about one's position within society and influence one's perception of the world. However, it is equally important to note that feelings can also lead to misperceptions about one's position and treatment in the world. While Root's specific racial mixture is not stated, she was born in the Philippines and raised in Los Angeles verifying her bicultural status. Root's feelings of being "stifled" and "choked" because she considers herself mixed may cause her to perceive the world as requiring her "fragment[ation]"<sup>157</sup> and alter the perception of her structural analysis in very real ways: Root may misinterpret acts of prejudice as caused by her mixed identity when in actuality the prejudice may be due to belonging to one racial group, her class status, or her gender; Root may perceive having to make a choice about her identity in certain social situations where she is not actually asked or required to make such a choice;<sup>158</sup> Root may believe people are racializing certain phenotypical attributes of her body in an attempt to diagnose her race when in actuality they may be making perceptual judgments based on gender or class rather than racial ambiguity; and most poignantly, Root may believe she faces oppression and racism based on her racially mixed identity when perhaps her position of identifying as mixed race works to distance her from the real oppressions and racisms faced by those with darker skin or less ambiguous phenotypical markers. Root's perceived oppression against people who identify as mixed race

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid 3.

<sup>158</sup> One example may be attending a cultural event of one ethnic group and believing that you are forced to choose to identify as a member of that racial or ethnic group to the exclusion of other groups when in actuality no one in particular is requiring you to make this choice.

and her resolution of a “Bill of Rights” elucidates the prominence of affective states in the agenda of the Mixed Race Identity Movement.

Understanding the ways in which affect has influenced the Mixed Race Identity Movement’s fight for state-sponsored recognition becomes crucial for comprehending the problems associated with soliciting the state to solve affective matters. As has been discussed in this chapter, while fighting for government recognition, Ramona Douglass ignores the ways in which particular racial histories may matter in terms of the identity choices of certain individuals, as well as how millennial mixed race identities may support investments in dominant ideologies of race and racial hierarchy. On one level Susan Graham’s remarks may interrupt notions of kinship and family in relation to race, but they also reveal the ways in which even the most secure kinship relations become threatened in the face of the power of race; and, they only further bolster heteronormative and racial essentialist notions that have also been so profoundly entrenched in American understandings of family. And, while Maria P.P. Root argues for government recognition, she neglects to understand the ways in which the reality of her structural analysis may in fact be clouded by her perceptions of mixed race identity and oppression. Despite these critiques, and the others made against the Mixed Race Identity Movement, understanding these personal motivations seems crucial because people continue to want to identify as mixed race well into the new millennium. Together, Douglass, Graham, and Root constitute three of the major leaders of the Mixed Race Identity Movement; thus, looking closely at the language of these three women, this chapter exhibits the close relationship between feelings—of self-worth, pride, dignity, respect, and power, as well as, of family and kinship—and a sense of identity and personhood.

In the first section of this chapter, I have identified the ways in which we can locate the centrality of affect within the specific statements and writings of the three most prominent women of the Mixed Race Identity Movement by looking at particular feelings identified through their use of language. In so doing, we have also discussed some major trappings that arise from politicizing affect—how each of these writer’s personal agendas belie notions of heteronormativity, racial essentialism, and the power of race to control and demarcate bodies in the United States. In this concluding section, I would like to shift the focus and examine the way in which these women’s affective motivations consolidate into a larger affective drive behind the Mixed Race Identity Movement as a whole and result in its preoccupation with the “end goal” of government recognition and tabulation to solve their affective states.<sup>159</sup> In scrutinizing this larger affective drive of the Mixed Race Identity Movement and Millennial Mixed Race Identity we can illuminate the ways in which affect drives political action in these types of movements, the way in which this affective drive supports heteronormative sequencing of time, and, more significantly, we can also reveal the missed opportunities that arise from seeking out the state to solve affective conditions.

While looking at each of the individual statements made by Douglass, Graham, and Root has permitted us to locate the specific feelings represented through their use of language, in order to understand the centrality of census tabulation as the “end goal” of the Mixed Race Identity Movement, I am now going to use an affective lens to highlight how the sentiments in each of these statements consolidate into what can be understood as a “pursuit of respect” that is ultimately tied to subjecthood. Here, I am going to borrow Sara Ahmed’s affective paradigm of happiness to better understand the affective drive of the Mixed Race Identity Movement.

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<sup>159</sup> Ahmed (2010) 33.

Ahmed's paradigm is especially insightful because it illuminates the way in which we move towards objects based on the idea that these objects will bring happiness to us in the end (in achieving or attaining them).<sup>160</sup> This understanding of the intentionality with which affect moves us towards specific objects/goals is particularly useful in comprehending the continued significance of Millennial Mixed Race Identities into the new millennium; and I will continue this discussion into the next chapter looking at a more specific Millennial Mixed Race Identity, Hapa.

For now, though, our focus remains on the ante-millennial Mixed Race Identity Movement. Although the statements of Douglass, Graham, and Root are not in a direct "pursuit of happiness,"<sup>161</sup> we can identify that there is an "end goal" within the movement: government tabulation via the national census. Ahmed clarifies that we understand that "objects" are not just "physical or material things," but can also refer to "anything that we can imagine might lead us to happiness."<sup>162</sup> It is the result from obtaining these objects that then becomes the most principal consideration. In this sense, then, census tabulation is "the object" that becomes imbued with happiness (it is the object that will bring happiness to those within the movement) because it becomes conflated with state-sponsored recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity via state-sponsored subjecthood. Interestingly, this paradigm uncovers the ways in which abstract feelings can become associated with political purpose/action and drive the movement (as intentionality) to become preoccupied with the object (census tabulation and state-sponsored

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<sup>160</sup> For Ahmed, happiness "involves a specific kind of intentionality" that Ahmed identifies as "end oriented" (33). . In her paradigm of happiness, Ahmed clarifies that the end-orientated goal comes from understanding that the feeling of happiness is positioned in such a manner as that we "imagine" objects will "bring happiness to us" (33)

<sup>161</sup> Term coined by Sarah Ahmed in her essay "Happy Objects."

<sup>162</sup> Ibid 41.

recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity) that will supposedly bring with it the ultimate feeling of happiness; in this case, respect via racial subjecthood.

In order to understand why racial subjecthood becomes so significant for the Mixed Race Identity Movement, it is important to understand that prior to the centennial census, Douglass, Graham, and Root believed that individuals who identify as mixed race were nonexistent in the eyes of the state. In their perspective, after the civil rights legislation was enacted in the mid-1960s, an ethno-racial pentagon was standardized consisting of five mutually exclusive racial groups—*Asian/Pacific Islander, African American, Caucasian, Native American, and Hispanic* (if conceived of racially).<sup>163</sup> These racial absolutes became the norms by which our notions of racial identity are understood. Omi and Winant highlight the power of these racial norms when they suggest:

One of the first things we notice about people when we meet them (along with their sex) is their race. We utilize race to provide clues about who a person is. This fact is made painfully clear when we encounter someone whom we cannot conveniently racially categorize—someone who is for example, racially “mixed” or of an ethnic/ racial group we are not familiar with. Such an encounter becomes a source of discomfort and momentarily a crisis of racial meaning.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> I realize that these categories, even as the “five major racial groups,” are highly contested. For example, in the past few decades, there have been numerous debates about the pan-ethnic conflation of these categories, as well as how axes of class, gender, and sexuality may intersect with and trouble these categories. The OMB Directive 15 defining guidelines established these five mutually exclusive racial categories for the purpose of standardizing the tracking of racial data and discrimination in the United States in 1977. See Maria P.P. Root’s “Introduction” and Carlos A. Fernandez’s chapter “Government Classification of Multiracial/Multiethnic People” in *The Multiracial Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier* (1996).

<sup>164</sup> Omi and Winant 59.

As I have written elsewhere,<sup>165</sup> in our everyday encounters, racial categories and compartmentalization provide us with a set of definitions that we project onto the body we see and that help to define both the other we are encountering and our self in that moment. Since, oftentimes, a person who may identify as racially mixed cannot be easily categorized or is often miscategorized,<sup>166</sup> what is left is a “crisis of racial meaning” which destabilizes the primacy of racial absolutes and all racial categories, as well as their true significance for the self and the other. This “crisis of racial meaning” might become more pronounced as racial mixing occurs more and more over multiple generations, or it might simply re-stabilize through legislating new racial categories as was the case with “mulattos” during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.<sup>167</sup>

Compartmentalization of people into racial groups is a kind of practice that we engage in constantly. Amongst these interactions, we engage in the compartmentalization of people into racial groups when confronted with a subject who identifies as racially mixed, who is the embodiment of the absurdity of racial categorization and a “source of discomfort,” which must then be reconciled in terms of the pre-existing racial absolutes in order to re-secure the racial identity of the self and the other at that particular moment. This desire for racial “absolutes” is

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<sup>165</sup> The following paragraph was originally published in my article “Picturing the Mix: Visual and Linguistic Representations in Kip Fulbeck's *Part Asian•100% Hapa*” in *Critical Studies in Media Communication* Volume 29, Issue 5, 2012.

<sup>166</sup> It is important to note that miscategorization can often occur based on notions of race that are specific to location. For example, an individual may be (mis)categorized as Latino, Mexican, or mestizo close to the U.S./Mexico border or in areas where there are large populations of Mexican/Americans. That same individual could be (mis)categorized as Asian-American, hapa, or Asian in a community where Asian/Americans are predominantly represented.

<sup>167</sup> According to the *Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920: Volume II: Population 1920: General Report and Analytical Tables*, the 1920, 1910, and 1870 census reports instructed that “full-blooded Negroes” be reported as “black” and all “Negroes having some proportion of white blood” as “mulatto” (16).

a desire to make sense of race based on the currently accepted norms, what Judith Butler defines as a “form of social power that produces the intelligible field of subjects.”<sup>168</sup> This, then, leaves those who exist in-between these “normal” categories—those individuals who may identify as more than one racial absolute (i.e. as mixed race) as racially unintelligible<sup>169</sup> within the current racial discourse. Furthermore, particular racial mixtures themselves may become racially intelligible in ways that other mixtures may not; for instance, black/white or Native/white mixes may be racially intelligible in a way that black/Asian, black/Native mixes are not. According to Butler who follows Foucault, “discourse might be said to produce the subjects” to “actively constitute them.”<sup>170</sup> Racial subjects are created at the moment that they are constituted within racial norms; and, subjecthood is “allocated” in conjunction with which social norms are deemed necessary to be honored and expressed by a body.<sup>171</sup> In other words, those bodies that exist outside racial norms are not granted racial subjecthood within the current paradigm; in racial terms, these individuals do not exist to the state.

As we saw in the first part of this chapter, for Douglass, Graham, and Root being nonexistent in the eyes of the state is extremely damaging because they believe it negatively impacts notions of self and identity, seemingly erases kinship relations to the public eye, and prevents proper tabulation in the fields of medicine and civil rights enforcement. In response, Graham and Douglass in particular, see tabulation as concretizing the allocation of subjecthood

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<sup>168</sup> See Butler (2004) 48.

<sup>169</sup> I use the term *unintelligible* rather than the term *unclassifiable* because individuals who exist in-between the normalized racial categories may still be classifiable if they choose to identify as one of, or amongst, the normalized categories of race. The term *unintelligible* suggests an indecipherability of existing as something other than those normalized categories.

<sup>170</sup> See Butler *Undoing Gender* (2004) 49-50; see Foucault “The Means of Correct Training.” *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977) 136-138.

<sup>171</sup> Butler (2004) 58.



for these bodies that want to identify as mixed, thereby, granting these bodies the “respect” they deserve to exist, as they want to. For Root, the “end-goal” may not be census tabulation exactly, but rather, a feeling of respect garnered from the recognition of self-determination more broadly that grants access to power and, thus, respect. In this sense, we can understand that both social and government recognition of people who wish to identify as mixed race may serve as an “object” that brings with it resolution and good feeling for those fighting for census tabulation within the Mixed Race Identity Movement. For Graham, Douglass, and Root positive feeling is interconnected to the end-goal of recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity because once individuals are granted the right to be recognized as mixed race, they are also granted feelings of dignity and respect that follow from the allocation subjecthood via such recognition (or so they hope).

Significantly, this drive towards affective resolution (happiness) via state-sponsored recognition and racial subjecthood further perpetuates the power of race to demarcate and differentiate bodies within the United States. Rather than focusing on the ways in which the Mixed Race Identity Movement can obtain this affective resolution, investigating the way in which the state fails to resolve these affective states offers a more innovative opportunity for individuals who continue to struggle with mixed race identity in the new millennium. Shifting the focus from the positive affect of happiness to consider the negative affects that arise in these failures by the state may actually provide a more disruptive and revolutionary path to political action, as well as provide an opportunity to investigate the way in which the desire for positive affects (happiness and resolution) may actually work against the goal of transformation that the movement desires.

Interestingly, the statements made by Douglass, Graham, and Root belie a certain inclination toward positive affects—the resolution of respect, the pursuit of a feeling of dignity. For Douglass, Graham, and Root there is a sense of failure for individuals who want to identify as mixed race that is associated with not being recognized through government tabulation. However, as Jack Halberstam states in *The Queer Art of Failure*, "while failure certainly comes accompanied by a host of negative affects, such as disappointment, disillusionment, and despair, it also provides the opportunity to use these negative affects to poke holes in the toxic positivity of contemporary life."<sup>172</sup> While there may be a potential in negative affects, the early writers of the Mixed Race Identity Movement do not seem to take advantage of these failures as Halberstam suggests. Instead, Douglass, Graham, and Root attempt to resolve the negative affects through government recognition and racial subjecthood. As detailed earlier, for Douglass, counting and respecting people who identify as mixed race is directly correlated to gaining government recognition. For Graham, government tabulation also brings a feeling of resolution as it acknowledges the existence of such individuals. Conversely, the denial of government recognition for these advocates is seen as negative—a disavowal of existence, a denial of respect and dignity. Root directly articulates her feelings of oppression, feelings of being stifled and choked, feelings of fragmentation; and, her writing pervades a sense of anger at being made to feel these negative affects as she declares her writing a call to change the system that causes her to feel fragmented and oppressed.<sup>173</sup> Each of these writers pursues government recognition as the means by which their negative affects may be resolved rather than taking a chance to disrupt the entire system of racial classification and racial objectification through the

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<sup>172</sup> Halberstam's *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011, Kindle Edition) Location 129.

<sup>173</sup> See Root's "A Bill of Rights" (6).

failures they experience and/or to seek validation for their identities through an entity other than the state.

When considering this motivation for resolution by the Mixed Race Identity Movement it is crucial to see the ways in which this pursuit of respect (happiness) actually fortifies the existing racial structure and heteronormative sequencing of time in the United States and depicts the problems associated with a politics fueled by feelings and emotion. Each of these writers in the Mixed Race Identity Movement desires government tabulation of individuals who wish to identify as mixed race. This tabulation does not require a rejection of racial classification en masse. Rather, the Mixed Race Identity Movement only wants to shift racial legibility to include “seeing” mixed race individuals. Pointedly, Halberstam states: “to ‘see like a state’ means to accept the order of things and to internalize them.”<sup>174</sup> Halberstam’s insights are interesting when thinking about how the Mixed Race Identity Movement desires resolution—government recognition of people who wish to identify as mixed race—that very literally “see[s] like the state.” The Mixed Race Identity Movement does not reject the power of the state to determine its racial subjects; rather, the movement consents to the racial “order of things” and actually “internalizes” the ways in which the state determines personhood. By demanding government tabulation, the Mixed Race Identity Movement supports the power of government to regulate and control which bodies are legible within its borders. At the very moment when the Mixed Race Identity Movement could use the failures of individuals who see themselves as mixed race to alter the power of the state to determine personhood and racial citizenship, it calls for the state to use such power to resolve the negative affects of disappointment, disillusionment, and indignation.

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<sup>174</sup> See Halberstam, Location 255.

Furthermore, illuminating the intentionality of the Mixed Race Identity Movement through an affective paradigm of happiness not only clarifies how affect drives political action in the movement; but, more crucially, it reveals how this intentionality further supports notions of heteronormativity. Habiba Ibrahim argues in her book *Troubling the Family: The Promise of Personhood and the Rise of Multiracialism* that the Mixed Race Identity Movement has privileged a heteronormative structuring of time by focusing on private familial life and affective relationships of familial love.<sup>175</sup> Ibrahim's argument concentrates on the ways in which the Mixed Race Identity Movement has neglected its own feminist genealogy and favors the family and multiracial children. In looking at the Mixed Race Identity Movement as a pursuit of positive affect, we can also understand another way in which the movement supports notions of heteronormative time sequencing. In its pursuit of respect/happiness, the Mixed Race Identity Movement further privileges a linear concept of time whereby state-sponsored subjecthood via census tabulation and recognition becomes the ultimate end-goal. In this sense, the intentionality of the movement aligns with heteronormative time as it moves along a linear trajectory towards the future where subjecthood is granted via state-sponsored recognition.

Rather than focusing on the "end-goal" of resolution/happiness, concentrating on the failures of the state can disrupt the power of race in the United States and the preferentiality of heteronormative time. Halberstam argues, "failure allows us to escape the punishing norms that discipline behavior and manage human development with the goal of delivering us from unruly childhoods to orderly and predictable adulthoods."<sup>176</sup> In this sense, focusing only on the failures of recognition for people who identify as mixed race actually disrupts the linear sequencing of

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<sup>175</sup> Ibrahim refers to this movement as the multiracial movement. I refer to it as the Multiracial Identity Movement, which I will detail more in chapter 1 of the dissertation.

<sup>176</sup> Halberstam Location 129.

time because it does not favor an end-point of resolution. Rather, focusing on failures of recognition can offer a more recursive understanding of multiracial time—for instance, the failures of recognition for an individual who identifies as mixed race may occur over and over throughout the course of his/her life; and, these failures of recognition may have different meanings at different times informed not only by past experiences of failure but also the anticipation of future failures.<sup>177</sup> In this way, there is no privileging of adulthood or the end-goal of census tabulation because there is no focus on the positive resolution; the focus is on the failures that can occur at any time and in any place or space. Furthermore, as we discussed above, there are certain bodies that fall outside the parameters of racial norms. Rather than focusing on how to “see like the state” and gain racial subjecthood for these bodies via state-sponsored recognition and the restructuring of the racial paradigm, investigating the failure of the state to account for all the bodies within its current racial system reveals the inadequacy of privileging racial identity above other forms of identification in the first place. This does not mean that we should move towards a post-racial society or that we should forget the histories of race in the United States, as some may argue. It just means that we need to disrupt the power that race and racial identity have had and continue to have in American society.

Although the census debates and other early writings of the Mixed Race Identity Movement have been critiqued for their inclination toward the “personal,” the motivations of the movement have not actually been investigated in relation to the more private sphere of affect. In examining the Mixed Race Identity Movement through a perspective of affect, this chapter has

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<sup>177</sup> This is an idea we will discuss in further detail in the third chapter of this dissertation. This notion of the recursive nature of identity formation through our contact with others is based on Ahmed’s concept of queer phenomenology that will also be further developed in the third chapter of this dissertation.

offered a supplemental understanding of the development of such a politics of recognition in the 1980s and 1990s. Understanding the affective motivations in the statements of the early leaders of the Mixed Race Identity Movement, such as Ramona Douglass, Susan Graham, and Maria P.P. Root depicts the way in which affect effects our desires for specific identifications, reveals the power of race to undermine even our most intimate affective relationships, shows the way in which affect can become the predominant drive of political action, and exposes the complications of looking to the state to solve affective conditions. In offering this supplemental affective history of the Mixed Race Identity Movement, we can begin to see how the ultimate goal of census tabulation may have been doomed from the start. On the one hand, a politics of recognition based on seeking out the state to solve affect states is not the same as focusing on material conditions of oppression. As mentioned before, feelings of oppression and powerlessness are not the same as the material reality of oppression and disempowerment although these feelings and realities can be interconnected in some cases. On the other hand, pursuing census tabulation as a means of affective resolution (happiness or respect) only works to support the primacy of heteronormativity and the power of race. In conclusion, I have attempted to suggest the potential of concentrating on the failures and negative affects that occur in relation to identity formation for individuals who identify as mixed race, rather than on the positive affects of resolution. In the upcoming chapters, we will focus more exclusively on a particular Millennial Mixed Race Identity and what happens once state-sponsored recognition via census tabulation is achieved.

## **Affective Operations: Affect, Recognition, and Hapa Identity in the Postmillennial United States**

As we saw in the previous chapter, many of the dominant writings about mixed race identity prior to the millennium emphasize feelings of marginalization or exclusion for people who want to identify as mixed race but feel impeded from doing so because dominant understandings of racial identity require that individuals choose to identify within one racial group or another at any given time. In response to this perceived exclusion, many of the writers and scholars before the millennium focused their attention on seeking out the state to resolve these feelings of marginalization through the creation of a multiracial identifier on the centennial Census. The 2000 Census was the first census that permitted individuals to self-identify as belonging to more than one racial group. With this change, the main goal of the Mixed Race Identity Movement was, for all intents and purposes, realized. However, in the new millennium individuals who identify as mixed race<sup>178</sup> and identify as having partial Asian/American<sup>179</sup> ancestry continue to express the same negative feelings of isolation, invisibility, disrespect, and misunderstanding as those articulated by the leaders of the Mixed Race Identity Movement more than three decades ago. It would seem that the pursuit of happiness/respect (or affective resolution) vis-à-vis the state-sponsored recognition fought for and won by the Mixed Race Identity Movement in some significant ways failed to achieve the desired affects of acceptance,

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<sup>178</sup> Although the work of Michael Omi and Howard Winant has exposed race as a socially constructed category that is constantly shifting and changing meaning (and bounds) based on power dynamics and domination, the very concept of mixed race presupposes stable and discrete racial categories (Omi, *Sum of Our Parts*, ix).

<sup>179</sup> *Asian* refers to the racial group delineated by the Office of Management and Budget's Directive No. 15, which standardized racial/ethnic categories for the purposes of statistical reporting, data collection, and the presentation of data. The Census still uses this category, which includes Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander. The problems with the conflation of these racial identities into one racial group will be discussed later.

inclusion, understanding, and respect that these individuals desire. In response to this failure, many individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry<sup>180</sup> have sought out alternative modes of recognition for more specific Millennial Mixed Race Identities to achieve the affective resolution not garnered by the state. Many of these individuals have also participated in a problematic conflation of Asian American, Asian, and Pacific Islander identity within these more particularized Millennial Mixed Race Identities. While I have decided not to contribute to this conflation by using the more cumbersome signifier *individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry*, part of my critique will focus on how many of the people I discuss in this chapter do participate in this erasure.

Looking specifically at individuals, who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry and the Millennial Mixed Race Identities that they desire and identify with, is particularly relevant because the number of individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry is growing. According to the data collected from the centennial Census, 4.2 percent of the total population identified as Asian.<sup>181</sup> This total number included

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<sup>180</sup> Within the discourses of Critical Mixed Race Studies and Asian American Studies, there are a number of terms that have emerged to signify individuals who identify as mixed race and identify as, at least partially, having Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander ancestry. As I detailed in the Introduction of this dissertation, many of these signifiers imitate ideas about race as hereditary and not as an identification term. Rather than rely on any of the signifiers currently circulating within Critical Mixed Race Studies and Asian American Studies, which suggest that an individual *is* a particular race or combination of races, I will use a more cumbersome signifier to remain as precise as possible in depicting the way in which these particular individuals chose to *identify* in specific racialized ways. I also want to be cautious not to conflate Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander. One of the major critiques we will discuss later in this chapter has to do with this conflation. As such, I will not be using Pacific Islander as part of my signifier since most of the writers, scholars, and other individuals in this discussion are not of Pacific Islander ancestry. Throughout this chapter, I will refer to these individuals as *individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry*.

<sup>181</sup> Asian refers to racial group used by the Census that includes Asian and Asian American.



10.2 million people who identified as Asian alone<sup>182</sup> and 1.7 million people who reported Asian as well as one or more races.<sup>183</sup> In 2010, the census data showed that 17.3 million people or 5.6 percent of the population identified as Asian. This included 14.7 million people who identified as Asian alone and 2.6 million people who identified as belonging to Asian and one or more other racial groups.<sup>184</sup> The Asian population within the United States experienced the most growth from the centennial Census to the 2010 Census. While the Asian population<sup>185</sup> experienced a growth rate four times the rate of the general population and increased by about 43 percent, the population of Asian Americans reporting multiple racial groups “grew at a faster rate than the Asian alone population, growing by 60 percent in size since 2000.”<sup>186</sup> This was an increase of approximately one million individuals in just one decade. While the census has offered individuals a place to identify as mixed race and be recognized by the state as such, many individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry continue to express negative feelings of isolation, misunderstanding, and invisibility. With the number of people who identified as belonging to Asian and one or more racial groups on the most recent census

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<sup>182</sup> *Asian alone* is the term employed by the Census Brief to refer to the group of individuals who reported belonging to the racial group Asian/Asian American alone.

<sup>183</sup> It is important to note that the census data only includes those individuals who chose to fill out the census forms; thus, the numbers are not wholly accurate. While these numbers reflect only those people who chose to report their identity and are small in comparison to the total population of 281.4 million, these numbers can be used to depict the growth of the population over the course of the census reports. See “The Asian Population: 2000” from the Census 2000 Brief for more information.

<sup>184</sup> Again, this data is not wholly accurate as it is based on only the number of individuals who chose to answer the questions about race. See “The Asian Population: 2010” from the Census 2010 Brief for more information.

<sup>185</sup> By *Asian population* I am referring to the population who identified as belonging to the Asian racial group on the census.

<sup>186</sup> According to the “The Asian Population: 2010” from the Census Brief 2010, “From 2000 to 2010, the Asian multiple-race population grew by about 1 million people. The multiple-race Asian population grew at a faster rate than the Asian alone population, growing by 60 percent in size since 2000” (4).

continues to grow, it is likely that the number of individuals who seek out this affective resolution in relation to this particular millennial mixed racial identity is also likely to remain relevant.

Rather than using the failures of the Mixed Race Identity Movement and state-sponsored recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity to disrupt the power of race and racial classification, heteronormativity, or white supremacy in the United States, individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry have sought out smaller communities to gain affective resolution via recognition of more particularized Millennial Mixed Race Identities. In this chapter, I will focus on one of these more specific Millennial Mixed Race Identities used by individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry, Hapa, which emerges alongside the signifiers mixed race and multiracial during the Mixed Race Identity Movement but becomes most popular after the millennium with Kip Fulbeck's *The Hapa Project* (2006).

*The Hapa Project* began in 2001 just after the implementation of the multiracial identifier on the centennial Census. Fulbeck photographed over 1200 participants across the United States “who all self-identified as Hapa.”<sup>187</sup> With photo shoots taking place in New York, Los Angeles, Illinois, Hawai'i, *The Hapa Project* is one of the most popular cultural productions centered on individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. Fulbeck collected 116 images from his larger photographic project and created the book *Part Asian 100% Hapa* (2006) published by Chronicle Books, an independent publisher in San Francisco specializing in

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<sup>187</sup> See “About” page at *KipFulbeck.com*. On the website, Fulbeck has changed his definition of the term *Hapa* to specify that the term was “defined for the project as mixed ethnic heritage with partial roots in asian and/or pacific islander ancestry.” The original quote was originally accessed October 2010.

book's that offer their reader's a chance to "see things differently."<sup>188</sup> Of the 116 participants included within the book approximately 95 declared a European or Caucasian ethnic identity in their self-description (Fulbeck also identifies his racial identity as comprised of Caucasian and Asian ethnicities: British, Irish, and Chinese) and 25 participants declared their identities as comprised of minority only racial or ethnic identities (non-European/Caucasian ethnic identities). A variety of Asian ethnicities were also indicated through the self-identifications of the participants including: Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Indian, Okinawan, Thai, Malaysian, Laotian, Taiwanese, Hakka, and Shanghainese. As well as Pacific Islander identifications such as: Hawaiian, Guamanian, Chamorro, Samoan, and Palauan. *Part Asian 100% Hapa* has been lauded as "a book of intimacy, affirmation, beauty, and powerful self-expression."<sup>189</sup> Along with photographs, the book also includes a preface, introduction, and afterword, as well as attending self-descriptions for each curated photo. Together the self-descriptions, personal narratives, the Introduction, Foreword, and Afterword work to linguistically anchor the set of photos and determine the book's purpose and message.

With its popularity and prominence within the community of people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry, Fulbeck's *Part Asian 100% Hapa* becomes a critical work to be examined. Fulbeck notes that this was the book he wished he had when he

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<sup>188</sup> This is the official tagline of the publishing house. Other bestselling publications by Chronicle Books include: *Bad Girls Throughout History* by Ann Shen; *The Who, The What, and The When: 65 Artists Illustrate the Secret Sidekicks of History* by Jenny Volvovski, Julia Rothman, and Matt Lamothe; *Safari as a Way of Life: A Visual Biography of Dan Eldon* by Jennifer New; and the upcoming *Loving vs. Virginia: A Documentary Novel of the Landmark Civil Rights Case* by Patricia Powell

<sup>189</sup> *The Hapa Project*, 2010. Web. <http://www.seaweedproductions.com/hapa/>. This website has since been edited. The original statements can still be seen on the inside book jacket of Kip Fulbeck's *Part Asian 100% Hapa* (2006).

was growing up;<sup>190</sup> and, a quick perusal of reviews on sites like Amazon reveals that its general reception indicates it is a major point of connection for people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry around the country. With its general admiration and acceptance, it becomes essential to underscore some of the problematic issues at hand within this work. First, this chapter will examine the ways in which projects such as Kip Fulbeck's *Part Asian 100% Hapa* depict the failure of state-sponsored recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity by capturing the continued feelings of invisibility for individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. It will also look at the ways in which smaller communities, such as that created by Fulbeck's project, may work to alleviate the negative affects experienced by people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry when the state has failed to grant affective resolution via state-sponsored recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity. Second, and more importantly, this chapter will examine the ways in which the pursuit of assuaging negative affects through a project, such as *Part Asian 100% Hapa*, and the community it forms actually work to uphold notions of white supremacy and racial hierarchy through colonialism; maintains notions of white supremacy and racial hierarchy through its own investments in the privileging of whiteness; reifies racial essentialism and the power of race to control and govern different bodies; conflates the distinctions of Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander and the repercussions this has on the material differences and struggles between these varied groups. In fact, the very project of *Part Asian 100% Hapa* to create and illuminate a mixed race identity is a project of multiculturalism that inherently reifies racial essentialism, racial hierarchization, white supremacy, and colonialism through its affirmation in the power of race to differentiate and demarcate bodies.

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<sup>190</sup> See *The Hapa Project*.

In *Part Asian 100% Hapa*, Kip Fulbeck demonstrates the failure of the Mixed Race Identity Movement and government recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity to alleviate the negative affects experienced by people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry in relation to their racial identities by depicting the continued feelings of invisibility and misunderstanding associated with moments of failed recognition. While these encounters of misrecognition may seem trivial, Megan Watkins identifies the ways in which “moments of recognition” actually “function as affective force” that “accumulate[s] over time” and work in “fostering a sense of self-worth.”<sup>191</sup> Thus, when moments of possible recognition turn into instances of failed recognition (or misrecognition), there is a lasting negative affect that can cause real effects on individual self-perception and self-worth. For individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry, these moments of misrecognition can have the effect of fostering a sense of devalued self-worth centered on race and racial identity.

Fulbeck demonstrates the connection between the misrecognition of racial identity and negative affect. Fulbeck’s “Introduction” begins with the statement: “You don’t look Chinese.”<sup>192</sup> The statement appears without any pretense: the speaker is not identified, no context offered, and no response given. By excluding the identification of a speaker or any context, Fulbeck alludes to the commonality of the statement. He “know[s] this routine inside out.”<sup>193</sup> The speaker sees Fulbeck’s body and determines that this body is not immediately racially recognizable. In this moment, Fulbeck experiences an instance of failed recognition. By immediately focusing on an example of failed recognition at the sight of his racially ambiguous body, Fulbeck demonstrates the centrality of recognition in the construction of self-worth. The

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<sup>191</sup> Watkins 273.

<sup>192</sup> Fulbeck 11.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

feeling of misunderstanding that he experiences in his everyday encounters is primary—literally his first words in his book about racial identity. While it may seem that these feelings are fleeting, Fulbeck shows the way in which these emotional encounters can have lasting effects. He continues later to tell a story about elementary school when he was asked to pin flags on the countries of his origin: “A couple of classmates snicker and I sit down. It’s thirty years later and I still remember the feeling.”<sup>194</sup> Again, Fulbeck includes an anecdote about his emotional experience of isolation and difference in relation to his construction of self-worth and racial identity. He describes pinning two flags in Western Europe (Ireland and England) with no hesitation, but then he notes that the children in his class “snicker” in a moment of anti-Asian racism as he pins the only flag anywhere outside of Western Europe in China.<sup>195</sup> This “snicker” confirms his racial difference (Chinese/Asian) from his classmates (European/White). And while this moment of racial difference is a moment of anti-Asian sentiment experienced at the hands (or better said, the snickers) of his white classmates, this moment of racial difference can also be understood as a moment of failed recognition. It is precisely, that Fulbeck is made to feel racially *unlike* his classmates; he is distinguished as different (Asian/Chinese) rather than confirmed or recognized as similar (white/European). This moment of failed recognition continues to “leave a residue, a lasting impression”<sup>196</sup> on his sense of self and racial identity more than thirty years later. In this sense, the feelings experienced in a moment of failed

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<sup>194</sup> Fulbeck explains that each child is asked to pin a flag on a map to show the countries of his/her origin. He notes that the small Western European countries quickly fill up. And when his turn comes he describes pinning one flag in Europe and then walking “what seems like a mile across the class” to China. He remembers the children “snickering” and notes, “if there is a better way to visually isolate a kid in class, let me know” (15).

<sup>195</sup> It is important to recognize that this is not merely a distinction of nation, but one of race.

<sup>196</sup> In explaining the Spinozan distinction of *affectus* and *affectio*, Watkins clarifies that while *Affectio* may be fleeting it may also “leave a residue, a lasting impression that produces particular kinds of bodily capacities” (269).

recognition are not fleeting; rather, these negative affects accumulate over time and effect understandings of self-identity and self-worth over the course of a life.<sup>197</sup>

In his Foreword to *Part Asian 100% Hapa*, Sean Lennon echoes the way negative affect can accumulate from moments of misrecognition in relation to racial identity for individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. He says, “you will in Japan be considered white, and in America be considered Asian. This can be lonely at times.”<sup>198</sup> Lennon identifies the way in which individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry (Lennon himself identifies as Caucasian and Japanese heritage) experience race in different settings. He argues that in a country where the dominant race is Asian, an individual who identifies as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry will fail to be recognized as Asian and instead be recognized as racially different (as white). In a country where the dominant race is Caucasian, an individual who identifies as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry will be recognized as racially other (as Asian) and will fail to be recognized as white. In both cases, Lennon argues that the individual who identifies as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry experiences a failure of recognition—the failure to be recognized as both Asian and Caucasian in these instances.

Lennon fails to acknowledge the way in which these experiences of failed recognition may vary greatly depending on the individual’s racial mixture as well as the way in which the supremacy of whiteness is maintained through his own experience of misrecognition. It is important to note that experiences of failed recognition may vary significantly depending on the type of racial mixture of the individual. For example, an individual of mixed Asian and African-

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<sup>197</sup> This is an idea that I will develop further in the next chapter.

<sup>198</sup> Fulbeck 20.

American descent may have a very different experience of failed recognition or misrecognition than that of Lennon (Asian/Caucasian racial identity). I will further examine the dominance of Caucasian and Asian racial mixes in the larger population of individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry and the ways in which identification as racially mixed for these individuals' works to support notions of white supremacy. While Lennon notes that racial belonging should not matter, for him racial belonging does in fact matter a great deal "when you're being degraded or insulted or ignored simply because of your ethnic identity, or lack thereof."<sup>199</sup> Lennon's suggestion that racial identity or belonging "shouldn't matter" in the United States reveals the way in which a multiculturalist ideology has pervaded the American psyche and positioned our society, theoretically, "beyond" race. In actuality, American society and the identities of the individuals who comprise that society are completely bound up with notions of race. And, as Lennon's comments allude, moments of failed recognition based on racial identity and racial difference actually cause an accumulation of negative affects—feelings of isolation, degradation, and loneliness—that have real consequences on notions of self and identity.

While Fulbeck's and Lennon's writings frame the larger project of *Part Asian 100% Hapa*, the idea that moments of failed recognition have an effect on racial identity and notions of self-worth is also reiterated by the participants in *Part Asian 100% Hapa*. Attending each photograph, Fulbeck offers the participants the "opportunity to show their image and respond in their own words to the question [What are you?] that accompanies the lives of us in-betweens like a second skin."<sup>200</sup> One participant writes: "Really? You don't look Thai."<sup>201</sup> Like Fulbeck,

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Fulbeck 16.



this participant focuses on the sight of her racialized body. In her experience, her body is the source of failed recognition that affects her experience of her identity. Another participant states: “People tell me I’m ‘white’ b/c I look white’ But then others say they can see the Japanese in me after I tell them. They say, ‘Oh, I can see it in your eyes!’ Where does that leave me?”<sup>202</sup> Again, the participant highlights how misrecognition is linked to the sight of his racialized body. His final question reveals how these failures of recognition directly affect his sense of self and belonging. By focusing on moments of failed recognition that are directly linked to the sight of their racialized bodies, Fulbeck and his participants emphasize the significance of these emotional experiences on their own sense of self. The second participant asks a poignant question that depicts the deep entanglement of self-worth with the “recognition or affirmation on the part of others”<sup>203</sup> that has not been achieved through the promise of state-sanctioned recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity.

Fulbeck suggests that while state-sanctioned recognition has failed to assuage these feelings of misrecognition for many individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry, group identity and community formation may offer the alleviation of negative affects that these individuals desire. Fulbeck suggests that the persistent feelings of misrecognition experienced by people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry are in part due to the fact that many of these individuals have lacked the means to identify as a group. In his “Introduction,” Fulbeck notes that this particular group had “no title,

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<sup>201</sup> A female participant wrote: “Really? You don’t look Thai. Well let me look again. Yeah now I can see it around your eyes. You know Thai food is my favorite. Were you born in Thailand? Do you speak, what is it, Thai-wanese? You really don’t have an accent at all?” (Fulbeck 96).

<sup>202</sup> The full response reads: “People tell me I’m ‘white’ b/c I look white’ But then others say they can see the Japanese in me after I tell them. They say, ‘Oh, I can see it in your eyes!’ Where does that leave me? I’m getting conflicting messages” (Fulbeck 146).

<sup>203</sup> See Watkins’ discussion (275-276).

no name, no way to even identify as a group.”<sup>204</sup> He remembers growing up believing he “was the only one” who identified as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry.<sup>205</sup> According to Fulbeck even in the new millennium, the “phenomenon” of an increasing population of individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry has “until now been nameless.”<sup>206</sup> As a result, Fulbeck uses his project *Part Asian 100% Hapa* to create an identity for individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry and offer a means for these individuals to identify as a group in the hopes of combatting the negative affects accumulated through moments of misrecognition related to racial identity.

In order to accomplish this goal, Fulbeck constructs an identity for individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry by employing the term *hapa*.<sup>207</sup> Individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry living on the west coast of the United States began using Hapa as an identity in the 1990s. I capitalize Hapa to distinguish it as an identity that certain individuals and groups chose to use around the turn of the millennium. This is a distinction from the term *hapa* originally used in the Native Hawaiian language. The issues with the appropriation of this term will be discussed shortly. In response to a perceived exclusion of individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry from the traditional Japanese community in the 1990s, the Hapa Issues Form became the first group to engage Hapa as a millennial mixed race identity.<sup>208</sup> Picking up on the

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<sup>204</sup> Fulbeck 14-15.

<sup>205</sup> Fulbeck 14.

<sup>206</sup> Fulbeck 17.

<sup>207</sup> Footnote is not original to the quoted text. The use of the term *hapa* will be discussed shortly.

<sup>208</sup> The Hapa Issues Form was created in the 1990s as a faction within the Japanese American community. This group worked in conjunction with other multiracial advocacy groups on changing the census categories for the 2000 National Census.

mounting penchant to use the term Hapa as an identity, Fulbeck intends for the project to serve as “an introduction to the rest of the world and an affirmation for Hapas themselves, it presents the individuals and their growing community to the world.”<sup>209</sup> Fulbeck’s statement suggests a symbiotic relationship of community in the creation and substantiation of racial identity. While Fulbeck sees his project as a presentation of an already existing community, his statement actually highlights the way in which his project also functions as a means by which the identity is itself created and the community is formed. The suggestion of affect in Fulbeck’s statement is crucial in understanding the way in which community and racial identity are interconnected: Fulbeck intimates that the presentation of the whole community works as an “affirmation” for the individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry; affirmation is a process of recognition or emotional validation; thus, the community functions as a means by which the individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry are recognized and given emotional validation in relation to racial identity. This form of recognition differs from that which was offered by the state and centers more directly on the formation of and inclusion within a smaller community of individuals who identify in a similar way.

In order to understand the way in which smaller communities offer refuge from the negative affects experienced by individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry, it is important to understand how the community is formulated. The Hapa community created through *Part Asian 100% Hapa* can only be understood as an “imagined community.” In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of*

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See Kimberly McClain’s *Making Multiracials: State, Family, and Market in the Redrawing of the Color Line* (2007) 4.

<sup>209</sup> This statement was originally found on the website for *The Hapa Project*, which has since been edited. The comment can still be found on the inside book jacket.

*Nationalism* (1991), Benedict Anderson defined the nation as “an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”<sup>210</sup> Extending Anderson’s concept of “imagined communities” beyond the narrow definition of the nation-state leads to a discussion of the many smaller political communities found inside and outside the borders of nation-states themselves, including the Hapa community of *Part Asian 100% Hapa*. In Anderson’s definition the community is “imagined” because members will never know most of the other members, but still live in the “image of their communion.”<sup>211</sup> Fulbeck’s project had “more than eight hundred participants” at “several dozen shoots across the United States.”<sup>212</sup> The book is sold in bookstores across the United States, such as Barnes and Noble, and through online stores like Amazon. Its availability online opens the book up to a variety of global consumers, including other individuals that may identify as Hapa. Thus, although the Hapa-identifying participants and Hapa-identifying consumers of the product may “never know most of the other members,” the “imagined community” is formed through the literal image of communion—the faces on the page—and the figurative image of their communion as a discursive group, Hapas.

The “imagined community” does not in and of itself offer relief from the negative affects experienced by its individual members; the “imagined community” offers the promise of positive affect through a kinship network that, unavoidably, works to support the power of race and racial identity through its investment in Hapa identity. In order to comprehend how this community offers solace to its members, we must understand the way in which the community becomes an object associated with positive affects that holds affective value for its members. Building on

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<sup>210</sup> Anderson 6.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Fulbeck (2006) 16.

our discussion of the pursuit of affective resolution in the previous chapter, Sara Ahmed in her essay, “Happy Objects,” highlights the way in which certain objects (in this case, the abstract object of the Hapa community) can gain affective value due to the object’s relationship with ones we love or feel kinship towards.<sup>213</sup> Thus, in order to comprehend how the Hapa community and its attending Hapa identity gain affective value, we must also explore the way in which relationships and feelings of kinship work within the community. Ahmed notes that, “the social bond is always rather sensational.”<sup>214</sup> If we understand the social bond not as merely a miraculous occurrence between people, but, rather, as being based around actual sensations—feelings—between people, we can begin to comprehend how the Hapa community gains its affective value for its members. Ahmed notes that, “Groups cohere around a shared orientation toward some things as being good, treating some things and not other as the cause of delight.”<sup>215</sup> While Anderson does not directly define the nation as a form of kinship, Anderson does suggest that the “nation” should be understood as an ideology similar to kinship rather than as a political ideology such as fascism.<sup>216</sup> He also suggests that it is precisely feelings of fraternity—“the deep, horizontal comradeship”—that make the creation of the “imagined community” possible.<sup>217</sup> If we understand fraternity or comradeship as feelings of “friendship or mutual support within a

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<sup>213</sup> Ahmed discusses the ways in which our relationships with people and our feelings towards that person can also determine how we place “affective value” on objects. She writes, “if you are given something by somebody whom you love, then the object itself acquires more affective value: just seeing something can make you think of another who gave you that something” (33).

<sup>214</sup> Ahmed 35.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Anderson believes the nation should be understood as an ideology similar to *kinship* or *religion* rather than as akin to *fascism* or *liberalism* (30).

<sup>217</sup> Anderson 50.

group”<sup>218</sup> we can understand the ways in which the “imagined community” can accumulate affective value and provide positive sensations between its members that may be lacking in their relationships outside the Hapa community.

Interestingly, it appears that the archetypal relationships of kinship—those represented through the nuclear family—in some significant ways fail to provide the same affective reprieve as that promised through the Hapa community. Although there has not been much exploration of this phenomenon within Critical Mixed Race Studies, it would seem that despite their existence within a nuclear family, individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry are not receiving the positive affect necessary to combat the negative feelings of isolation, misunderstanding, and invisibility that they experience in the United States. As we discussed in the previous chapter, some theorists believe that the Multiracial Identity Movement has been as much a “politicization of kinship” as it has been “one of racial identity” precisely because “multiracial families are emerging *as* families.”<sup>219</sup> However, the continued feelings of invisibility expressed by individuals within these so-called “multiracial families”<sup>220</sup> offer proof that the “emergence” of “multiracial families” has not offered the affective respite that these individuals desire or need. This may be explained by the fact that the positive affect—feelings of delight, joy, etc.—of gaining recognition for traditional kinship units—the nuclear family—as

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<sup>218</sup> The Oxford English dictionary defines fraternity as: 1) a group of people sharing common profession or interests; 2) friendship and mutual support within a group.

<sup>219</sup> See Kimberly McClain DaCosta’s essay “All in the Family: The Familial Roots of Racial Division” in *The Politics of Multiracialism: Challenging Racial Thinking* (2004), 19.

<sup>220</sup> Note that the term “multiracial family” is used here because it is the term used by DaCosta in her essay. I understand that families cannot be understood as multiracial, but rather must be understood as comprised of members who racially identify as belonging to different racial groups.

“multiracial” served to alleviate negative feelings experienced by the interracial couple<sup>221</sup> rather than their offspring. It may also be explained by the fact that even though the Mixed Race Identity Movement may have increased awareness of families being comprised of individuals who identify with various racial identities, the “racialization of the family”<sup>222</sup> may be so ingrained within our psyches in the United States that we continue to misunderstand families, and their individual members, who may not share the same phenotypic features often used to identify race (skin color, hair texture, etc.). Another factor that may explain the failure of the nuclear family to provide the feelings of belonging that these individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry desire may be that within these nuclear families there may not be another member who experiences racial identity in the same exact way. Not only may the parents racially identify in a different way than the individual, but also siblings within the same family may identify in different ways based on their experiences of race and racial identity. For instance, siblings may racially identify in different ways because one sibling is phenotypically darker skinned than the other sibling and, thus, experiences race in a very different way than the other sibling; or, the siblings may live in different geographical areas where racial groups are delineated differently or racial minority/majority statuses vary. In this sense, the traditional form of kinship—the nuclear family—fails to provide the individual who

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<sup>221</sup> Here, interracial couple refers to the individuals who identified as belonging to one racial group but who were in an intimate relationship/marriage with a person who identified with a different racial group.

<sup>222</sup> As discussed in my previous chapter, *racialization of the family* is a term used by DaCosta in her essay “All in the Family: The Familial Roots of Racial Division.” She defines this as a process by which “racial premises came to be buried in our understanding of family, in which genetic/phenotypic sharing is coded to signify sharing, intimacy, and caring” (20).

identifies as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry with the positive affect they desire to combat the negative affects of isolation, misunderstanding, and invisibility.

When the relationships of kinship—offered through the nuclear family—fail to provide a sense of belonging for individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry, these individuals must seek out alternative ways to garner the positive affects necessary to combat their feelings of isolation, misunderstanding, and invisibility within the larger society. The Hapa community becomes an object that holds affective value for its members precisely because it becomes an “imagined” space where a feeling of delight—happiness, satisfaction, and joy—is accessible through a different form of kinship. This alternative form of kinship is offered through the promise of “deep, horizontal” likeness within the “imagined community.” One woman writes, “In identifying as hapa, I’ve found a way to normalize my in-betweenness. Having a specific word for what I am connects me to a larger racial demographic in which I perfectly fit.”<sup>223</sup> Identifying as Hapa becomes the crux of the community. It becomes shorthand for similar affective experiences, for similar struggles of racial identity, for similar desires of belonging and happiness. Scholar and activist, Wei-Ming Dariotis writes, “my identity is something more than the sum of my parts. ‘Hapa’ gave me such an identity. Instead of worrying, ‘where am I going to find another Chinese Greek Swedish English Scottish German Pennsylvania Dutch American?’ I realized I already had a Hapa community.”<sup>224</sup> In this

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<sup>223</sup> In an online article “‘Half Asian’? ‘Half White’? No — ‘Hapa’” for NPR’s *Codeswitch*, Alex Laughlin writes about her choice to use the identity Hapa. She says, “It’s this confusion of identity that characterizes the experience of being hapa — struggling to find a balance between being too white and too Asian. In identifying as hapa, I’ve found a way to normalize my in-betweenness. Having a specific word for what I am connects me to a larger racial demographic in which I perfectly fit—and more than that, it makes me remarkably unspecial. Among hapas, I’m no longer a biological curiosity, just a product of this country.”

<sup>224</sup> This is an excerpt from Wei-Ming Dariotis’s article “Hapa: The Word of Power.”



“imagined community” the individual members imagine affective connections with each other that bind them into a type of kinship network and provide positive sensations of empathy, belonging, and connection. This kinship network is based wholly on imagined connections of affective similarity and recognition; and, the form of recognition offered through this kinship network differs greatly from the form of recognition offered by the state. In the “imagined community” recognition works more intimately for both the readers of the book and the participants—there are others (those photographed) who look like, identify like, and have like experiences to themselves (the readers); it is these similar affective experiences that offer with it not just a sense of belonging but also a more intimate form of recognition of racial identity. Thus, even without actually knowing the other members of this group, it is this intimate form of recognition offered through an alternative kinship network that seems to offer an affective resolution or refuge for the individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. However, while David Eng argues that *feelings of kinship* can offer an alternative means to understanding identity formation beyond linguistically inscribed identity categories, in this particular formulation of “kinship feelings” affective connection works to further support investments in race and racial identity by enhancing affective value of the identity category Hapa.<sup>225</sup>

Attention to affect helps to explain why individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry use Hapa as an identity and seek out the community that such an identity can create through projects like *Part Asian 100% Hapa*. Understanding how the

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<sup>225</sup> David Eng in *The Feeling of Kinship* discusses how affect can be used to investigate an alternative understanding of identity beyond identity labels in order to better grasp the complexity of identity. Later in this chapter, I will also discuss how affect can work for individuals who identify as mixed race and identify as having part Asian/American or Pacific Islander ancestry to subvert the power of racial identity categories.

Hapa community and its attending Hapa identity offer these individuals a form of intimate recognition illuminates how these millennial mixed race identities function to combat the negative affects of isolation, invisibility, and misunderstanding experienced by many of these individuals. However, while Hapa identity may cohere a community and offer a means to assuage the negative affects of its members, rather than using the failures of state-sponsored recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity to disrupt “the punishing norms that discipline behavior and manage human development,”<sup>226</sup> the formation of a Hapa community and the use of Hapa identity function to uphold notions of white supremacy and racial hierarchy through colonialism; maintain notions of white supremacy and racial hierarchy through the community and identity’s own investments in the privileging of whiteness; reify racial essentialism and the power of race to control and govern different bodies; and conflate the distinctions of Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander that has real repercussions on the material differences and struggles between these varied groups.

As previously mentioned, Fulbeck and other activists/theorists champion his project for the ways in which his project constructs and highlights Hapa identity and creates a Hapa community; he also believes that by bringing to light Hapa identity and community, his project works to challenge the predominance of the white/black color line in understandings of mixed race and the essentialism of the state-recognized multiracial identifier fought for and won by the Mixed Race Identity Movement. However, Hapa identity and the Hapa community function to uphold the very ideologies they seek to challenge. Scholars and activists working within the newly burgeoning field of Critical Mixed Race Studies must always remain self-critical in order

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<sup>226</sup> Halberstam Location 129.

to avoid “reinscribing essentialism and immutability onto multiraciality itself.”<sup>227</sup> People who identify as mixed race—and this includes people who identify as Hapa—must “explicitly critique both the ambivalence and the privilege of the positions [we] occupy” in order to avoid a “new form of domination” where people who identify as mixed race in a privileged position become complicit in a racial system against which we would have taken our “ethical and politicized stand.”<sup>228</sup> Even as Fulbeck works to dismantle the essentialism of the state-recognized Millennial Mixed Race Identity that the Mixed Race Identity Movement fought for, Fulbeck’s project does not always remain self-critical and aware of its own reinscription of essentialism or its own position of privilege. Thus, it is critical to explore the ambivalence and the privilege of Hapa identity and the community created through *Part Asian 100% Hapa*. By exploring this ambivalence, we can uncover some of the problems that arise from seeking out smaller communities—such as the one created through *Part Asian 100% Hapa*—and the identities they create to alleviate negative affects that surface in relation to racial identity.

Fulbeck envisions his project as highlighting a diversified understanding of Millennial Mixed Race Identity by focusing on individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry and the Hapa community. He claims that the notion of “multiracial” is “still limited to a black/white paradigm in the national mind-set.”<sup>229</sup> In fact, much of the academic interest and early autobiographical writings on Millennial Mixed Race Identity found their focus on people of mixed black and white parentage.<sup>230</sup> Even before the recent explosion of

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<sup>227</sup> Brunsma 3.

<sup>228</sup> Sequoya 302.

<sup>229</sup> Fulbeck 14.

<sup>230</sup> Many of the psychological and sociological studies used by the Mixed Race Identity Movement for changing the census categories centered on black/white biracial children and black/white identity formation. Many of these studies were included in the early collections of

academic interest in Millennial Mixed Race Identity, academics like Rueter (1918) and Mencke (1979) wrote about “mulattoes;” and historically, there is a large body of scholarship concerned with the tropes of “passing” and the “tragic mulatta,” which are both grounded in the black/white racial binary. While Fulbeck’s *Part Asian 100% Hapa* may call attention to the predominance of the black/white racial binary in the American consciousness, Fulbeck fails to take accountability for his project’s own essentialism and maintenance of racial hierarchy.

While Fulbeck’s project seeks to emphasize notions of diversity in relation to racial identity by expanding the definition of mixed race beyond the black/white paradigm, it simultaneously works to homogenize and limit the very multiplicity it seeks to represent by creating a standardized Hapa identity where all differences in race, ethnicity, class, gender, etc. are erased. In homogenizing the Hapa community and limiting the definition of Hapa, Fulbeck’s project does not actually diversify understandings of racial identity, but, rather, reifies boundaries around newly augmented racial categories, thus, perpetuating the power that race and racial identity have to govern certain bodies.

Within Fulbeck’s project, the power of race is reinforced through the homogenization of Fulbeck’s images. In *Part Asian 100% Hapa*, Fulbeck uses the presentation of his images to create the comradeship, and, thus, intimate recognition (previously discussed), of an “imagined community.” Going back to Anderson’s notion of the “imagined community,” the “nation” as a community is always conceived of as a “deep, horizontal comradeship.” In *Part Asian 100%*

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Maria P.P. Root (1992, 1994). In addition, many of the early autobiographical treatises on multiraciality have been produced by people of black/white racial heritage: James McBride’s *The Color of Water* (2006); Ursula Brown’s *The Interracial Experience: Growing Up Black/White Racially Mixed in the United States* (2001); Marion Kilson’s *Claiming Place: Biracial Adults of the Post-Civil Rights Era* (2001); Rebecca Walker’s *Black, White and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self* (2000); and Kathleen Korgen’s *From Black to Biracial: Transforming Racial Identity Among Americans* (1999).

*Hapa*, each photograph appears on the right hand page with an all white background; the subject is centered, bare shouldered; and, each photo is cropped in an identical manner.<sup>231</sup> As Fulbeck himself notes, “I photographed every participant similarly—unclothed from the collarbone up, and without glasses, jewelry, excess makeup, or purposeful expression. Basically, I wanted us to look like *us*.”<sup>232</sup> In constructing each image in a similar fashion and making each subject appear “natural,” the subjects, in some ways, all become the same—homogenized within the frame—and essentialized—the body becomes the focus of locating identity as *Hapa*. The homogenization of the images is a method for creating the “deep, horizontal comradeship” where gender, class, actual physical differences, etc. disappear in the sameness of *Hapaness*. And, although, this *hapagenization* of the individuals within the group works to provide the members of the community with the intimate feelings of likeness (a form of kinship) that seems to, in some ways, assuage the negative feelings of isolation, invisibility, and misunderstanding experienced by individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry, this *hapagenization* also becomes problematic. On the one hand, it reifies the power of race to determine and distinguish certain bodies by locating race back onto the body through racial essentialism.

On the other hand, this *hapagenization* becomes problematic because by using its power to create an “imagined community,” a community is achieved at the cost of limiting the multiplicity of these subjects’ realities. As Karen Maeda Allman suggests socially constructed categories, such as race and gender, “are mutually co –constructive” so that race, gender, and

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<sup>231</sup> To view images visit Fulbeck’s website. <http://kipfulbeck.com/the-hapa-project/>

<sup>232</sup> Fulbeck 16.

sexuality exist in a relational, “unstable triad.”<sup>233</sup> We can extend Allman’s notion of relational, unstable co-construction to include other categories beyond the three she has listed—i.e. class, ablebodiness, age, etc. What becomes evident through the notion of co-construction is that an individual may experience oppression relationally and con-constitutively depending on one’s specific location within and without various categories. By seeking the “deep, horizontal comradeship” of an “imagined community,” however, the aesthetic *hapagenization* disallows for a vision of identity formation as relational and co-constitutive, and, thus, ignores any actual inequality and exploitation<sup>234</sup> that may exist amongst the members of the Hapa community, such as: the continued inequality of Native Hawaiians based on their race and the exploitation of their land by individuals who may identify as Hapa,<sup>235</sup> the racial inequality that certain individual members of this community may experience depending on the shade of their skin, the inequality and exploitation that certain members may experience based on differences of class, gender, or sexual orientation, etc. The experiences of all Hapas are seemingly made indistinguishable through the image, even when the material realities and racializations may be vastly different depending on the subject’s gender, age, location, physical attributes, skin color, etc. In this sense, Fulbeck’s project emphasizes the power of race to govern and distinguish certain bodies by focusing solely on race as the primary locus of identity formation.

Furthermore, *Part Asian 100% Hapa* reifies the significance of racial categories and participates in a form of *racial redistricting*<sup>236</sup> that ultimately works to uphold notions of white

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<sup>233</sup> See Allman (1996) 279.

<sup>234</sup> Anderson (1991) 7.

<sup>235</sup> This idea will be further discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>236</sup> *Racial redistricting* is a term used by Charles A. Gallagher to explain how the borders of whiteness expand to include certain groups that may have previously been outside the boundaries of whiteness, but that “conform” to cultural and physical expectations of the dominant group.

supremacy and racial hierarchy in the United States. As Anderson notes, all nations, no matter their size, have “finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations.”<sup>237</sup> In this sense, while some are said to be members of the community, by implication others must remain outside the boundaries of the communal group. Thus, the very formation of a group or community inherently includes a delimiting dimension. We might call this *the paradox of identity formation*—the desire to belong to or create an alternative community as a response to perceived oppression simultaneously faces the unintentional, unforeseen existential reality that any formation includes some and excludes others. This paradox exists in *Part Asian 100% Hapa*. The political project is to expand the definition of *millennial mixed race identity (multiracial identity)* beyond the black/white paradigm.<sup>238</sup> And, although, Fulbeck seems to acknowledge “a black/white woman in New York telling me, ‘Hey, I’m Hapa, too,’” at many other points he limits *Hapa* to “part Asian/Pacific Islander.”<sup>239</sup> The book even includes a dictionary definition on a page before the acknowledgments that states: “ha•pa adj. 1. Slang. Of mixed racial heritage with partial roots in Asian and/or Pacific Islander ancestry.” Limiting and defining Hapa identity in such a way does not actually work to dismantle racial categories within the United States; rather, it works to redefine the racial categories while upholding their power to govern and distinguish specific bodies.

Fulbeck’s decision to delimit, define, and employ Hapa as an identity “Of mixed racial heritage with partial roots in Asian and/or Pacific Islander ancestry” also works to uphold

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Gallagher argues that these expanding boundaries work to maintain white privilege. See Gallagher’s essay “Racial Redistricting: expanding the Boundaries of Whiteness” in *The Politics of Multiracialism: Challenging Racial Thinking* (2004) 60. This idea of expanding the boundaries of whiteness will be discussed further in this chapter.

<sup>237</sup> See Anderson (1996) 7.

<sup>238</sup> Fulbeck 14.

<sup>239</sup> Fulbeck 17.

notions of white supremacy and racial hierarchy through colonialism. Judith Butler notes in *Undoing Gender* (2004), “On the one hand...are the words by which [an] individual gives himself to be understood. On the other hand, we have a description of a self that takes place in a language that is already going on, that is already saturated with norms, that predisposes us as we seek to speak of ourselves.”<sup>240</sup> Although Butler is specifically concerned with liminal gender identities, people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry find themselves similarly bound within a language already “saturated with norms.” To assert one’s identity as Hapa is contingent upon a discourse of race that already exists; this means that naming a millennial mixed race identity is contingent upon a discourse of race that is always already linked to the hegemony of monoraces, and its reliance on what Alex Cho defines as “a particularly Western hegemonic view of race as scientific, distinct, and measurable.”<sup>241</sup> For instance, terms such as *half-breed*, *hafu*, *mixed-blood*, even *hapa*, are terms of self-description that are always, already limited by the dominant racial language where the “norms” of racial absolutes rule. The significance of this dependence on “a discourse of fractions” is that it actually works to maintain and protect the boundaries and privileges of whiteness. Historically, a “discourse of fractions” was used in what Patrick Wolfe refers to as both inclusive and exclusive taxonomies of race.<sup>242</sup> On the one hand, this Western view of race was used to protect whiteness by ensuring that one-drop of black blood perpetuated the enslavement of the offspring

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<sup>240</sup> For more information regarding the conundrum of creating a self-identity in a language that already contains sets of norms surrounding intelligible identities see Butler (2004), especially the Introduction and chapter 3.

<sup>241</sup> See Cho (2009) 10.

<sup>242</sup> See Patrick Wolfe’s essay “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native” published in the *Journal of Genocide Research* (2006).



of slaves and landowners in order to increase wealth and power of the slaveholding white man.<sup>243</sup>

On the other hand, blood quantum was exploited by white imperialists to dispossess native peoples of their land in the project of settler colonialism.<sup>244</sup>

This issue of settler colonialism becomes particularly pertinent when recognizing Fulbeck's definition of Hapa conflates Asian and Pacific Islander, while erasing the latter since the title of the book suggests that to be one hundred percent Hapa is also to be Asian.<sup>245</sup> Thus, although the term *hapa* may empower people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry to feel a sense of belonging within a community, this community must be aware that the term already exists within a language saturated with the norms of white supremacy and privilege, especially in its replication of colonialism via the conflation of Asian/American and Pacific Islander.

Looking more closely at the etymology of the term *hapa* can offer further insight into the ways in which the Hapa community substantiated by Fulbeck becomes complicit with reinscribing essentialism and preserving white privilege through colonialism. Paul Spickard notes in his "Afterword" to *Part Asian 100% Hapa* that one of the misinterpretations of the book surrounds the issue of the definition of *hapa*.<sup>246</sup> While Spickard mentions the history of the term and its origin in the Native Hawaiian language, his "sympathy" for the "resentments some

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<sup>243</sup> See Wolfe 387.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Settler colonialism in relation to Asian/Americans and Pacific Islanders will be discussed further later in this chapter.

<sup>246</sup> See Fulbeck 261-262.

Hawaiians may have” surrounding the appropriation of the term is dismissive of the real issues at hand. One statement that depicts the protests of kanaka maoli<sup>247</sup> over the term declares:

By raping the Hawaiian language the once-colonized mixed Asians are now colonizing part of the Hawaiian language and part of the Hawaiian culture. This MUST stop. They can start by calling themselves ‘Japanese,’ ‘Americans of Japanese ancestry,’ ‘Hafu,’ ‘Chinese,’ ‘Korean,’ or just ‘Mixed.’ They do not have to choose a Hawaiian word.<sup>248</sup>

Rather than tackle the real concerns over the continued domination and colonization of the kanaka maoli people and their culture, Spickard uses the “nature of language” to constantly “morph and move” as an excuse to disregard these claims made by kanaka maoli.<sup>249</sup> This disregard for the concerns of kanaka maoli, in fact, only perpetuates the exact issues of power and domination that kanaka maoli raise through their statements of resistance.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> *Kanaka maoli* is the term used to identify the aboriginal people of the Hawaiian Islands. According to the *Hawaiian Kingdom Blog*, a blog produced and written by the “acting government of the Hawaiian kingdom presently operating within the occupied State of the Hawaiian Islands,” the term *kanaka maoli* is the most precise means by which to refer to the aboriginal people of the islands. According to the blog, since the Hawaiian Kingdom was recognized as a sovereign and independent State,” Hawaiian citizenry, which encompassed the native people of the islands, was open to non-natives as a nationality. The term used to differentiate the native people among this citizenry was aboriginal Hawaiian, which translates in the Hawaiian language to *kanaka maoli*, and is understood in relation to kanaka Hawai‘i, which translates to Hawaiian subject. For more information see “Natives if the Hawaiian Islands are not Indigenous People, They’re Aboriginal” posted on *hawaiiankingdom.org* on February 26, 2016. Retrieved Jan. 20 2017.

<sup>248</sup> According to Taniguichi this statement appeared on RealHapas.com. This website can no longer be accessed. See “Re-Mix: Rethinking the use of ‘Hapa’ in Mixedrace Asian/Pacific Islander American Community Organizing” published in the *Washington State University McNair Journal* (Fall 2005), p.138.

<sup>249</sup> See Fulbeck 261-262. Spickard argues that the “Hawaiian origins of the word Hapa are worthy of respect” and claims that the Hapa community uses the term with a sense of respect.

<sup>250</sup> Angela S. Taniguichi briefly details some of these Native Hawaiian resentments over the usage of the term *hapa* in her essay “Re-Mix: Rethinking the use of ‘Hapa’ in Mixedrace Asian/Pacific Islander American Community Organizing” published in the *Washington State University McNair Journal* (Fall 2005). She notes that activists/theorists working within the Native Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement, such as Haunani-Kay Trask have spoken out against

In “‘Hapa,’ The Word of Power,” Wei-Ming Dariotis makes a more significant attempt to wrestle with the appropriation of the term *hapa* by people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. She notes the linguistic shift of the definition: *hapa* has transformed from its Native Hawaiian usage, whereby it referred to a person of Euro-American and *kanaka maoli* mixture, to a slang term referring to anyone of partial Asian or Pacific Islander ancestry. Dariotis also specifies that Native Hawaiian protestors object precisely to this grammatical shift in reference whereby the term is now applied as an identity “to anyone of mixed Asian and or Pacific Islander heritage” when in actuality it was used as an adjective to denote specifically partial *kanaka maoli* heritage.<sup>251</sup> The etymological issues are not merely superficial. Dariotis rightly posits this cooptation and the “right to use language” as “a question of power.”<sup>252</sup> She acknowledges the history of colonialism and its varied and numerous effects on *kanaka maoli* sovereignty and the Hawaiian language. Historically, Native Hawaiians “lost for many years the right to their own language through oppressive English-language education.”<sup>253</sup> In addition to the historical issues of colonialism, there is a continued issue with land rights in Hawai‘i for the aboriginal people. Building on the Hawaiian Sovereignty leader Haunani-Kay Trask’s notion that Hawai‘i is a “settler society,” Candace Fujikane argues that not only have *kanaka maoli* and their indigenous culture been dominated by whites in the project of settler colonialism but also by

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the use of the term *hapa* by Asian Americans. She also notes these debates occurred online on websites such as RealHapas.com and Halvsie.com that no longer exist (138).

<sup>251</sup> Dariotis writes: “This phrase means part European American, with the implication being that the person is also part Native Hawaiian...I am also not using the term here like in [*sic*] ethnic signifier, which is what the word “Hapa” has become in the mainland context. In contrast, the native Hawaiian word is an adjective.”

<sup>252</sup> Dariotis writes: “This is not merely a question of trying to hold on to word that like many words encountered in the English language has been adopted, assimilated, or appropriated. This is a question of power. Who has the power or right to use language?”

<sup>253</sup> See Dariotis.

Asian and Asian Americans.<sup>254</sup> Considering the continued colonial situation within Hawai‘i highlights the problematic conflation between Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander within Fulbeck’s definition of Hapa. In her essay “Foregrounding Native Nationalisms: A Critique of Antinationalist Sentiment in Asian American Studies,” Fujikane highlights Eiko Kosasa’s differentiation between *settler* and *native*,<sup>255</sup> which distinguishes that in Hawai‘i only Native Hawaiians are colonized.<sup>256</sup> Thus, although Asians and Asian Americans may have suffered from forms of oppression, persecution, and domination in their homelands and/or in the United States, these groups are settlers in the context of Hawai‘i and the continental U.S. and their fights for civil rights are actually fights for “equal access to a colonial system” that continues to suppress and dominate Native people.<sup>257</sup> Furthermore, Fujikane argues that Asian Americans who have “settled” in Hawai‘i continue to benefit from this American colonial system and, therefore, perpetuate the oppression of Native Hawaiian people.<sup>258</sup> With this

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<sup>254</sup> In her Introduction “Asian Settler Colonialism in the U.S. Colony of Hawai‘i” to her book by the same name, Fujikane argues that settler colonialism in Hawai‘i needs to be reexamined with an attention to the “past and present roles that Asians have played in the U.S. colony of Hawai‘i” (1).

<sup>255</sup> In her essay “Hapa: A Word of Power,” Dariotis briefly outlines Candice Fujikane’s concept of settler colonialism and the distinction between “settler” and “native.” I have provided a much more detailed analysis of this colonial system and the concept of Asian settler colonialism as defined by Fujikane.

<sup>256</sup> Fujikane also distinguishes that only Native people have genealogical ties to land, so that the distinction as native is not merely identity politics but is about access to ancestral lands, government, and resources.

<sup>257</sup> See Fujikane’s essay “Foregrounding Native Nationalisms: A Critique of Antinationalist Sentiment in Asian American Studies” (76).

<sup>258</sup> In her essay “Foregrounding Native Nationalisms: A Critique of Antinationalist Sentiment in Asian American Studies,” Fujikane argues that many different ethnic Asian groups perpetuate colonialism within Hawai‘i (76). She identifies that many Japanese and Chinese settlers now hold much of the political power within Hawai‘i that suppresses the rights of Native people in the project of settler colonialism. Furthermore, Fujikane highlights that although there are power differentials amongst various groups of “settlers” that leave certain ethnic groups in subordinated

contextualization, and the continued reality of colonialism for the *kanaka maoli* people, “the appropriation of this one word has a significance deeper than many Asian Americans are willing to recognize.”<sup>259</sup> Although Dariotis attempts to wrestle with her own use of the term *hapa*, what Fulbeck’s project and the Hapa community fail to acknowledge is that the linguistic appropriation of the term *hapa* by people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry supports white supremacy and racial hierarchy through colonialism and the conflation of Pacific Islander with other Asian ethnic groups.

The Hapa community and Fulbeck’s project also support notions of white supremacy through an inherent privileging of whiteness. Investigating the etymology of the term *hapa* demonstrates the way in which white privilege is intrinsic to the Hapa identity used by Fulbeck and others who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. Spickard briefly mentions that the term *hapa* originated in the Native Hawaiian language as *hapa haole*. While the *kanaka maoli* argument highlights that the term originated to refer to a person who is half *kanaka maoli* rather than Asian, this argument does not underscore the role of whiteness within the definition of the original term. The original term *hapa* referred to a person who was a

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positions facing racism and inequality, even these groups must be understood as perpetuating colonialism in Hawai‘i (76-77).

<sup>259</sup> Dariotis states: “Native Hawaiians, in addition to all of the other ways that their sovereignty has been abrogated, lost for many years the right to their own language through oppressive English-language education. Given this history and given the contemporary social and political reality (and realty—as in real estate) of Hawaiian, the appropriation of this one word has significance deeper than many Asian Americans are willing to recognize. To have this symbolic word used by Asians, particularly by Japanese Americans, as though it is their own, seems to symbolically mirror the way Native Hawaiian land was first taken by European Americans, and is now owned by European Americans, Japanese and Japanese Americans and other Asian American ethnic groups that numerically and economically dominate Native Hawaiians in their own land.”

mixture of Native Hawaiian and haole (white).<sup>260</sup> As the term has shifted to refer to Hapa identity in the new millennium, there is a similar erasure of the role of whiteness at work within the newly substantiated Hapa community. Fulbeck defines *Hapa* as “mixed racial heritage with partial roots in Asian and/or Pacific Islander ancestry.”<sup>261</sup> While Fulbeck’s definition suggests a broader range of racial mixtures, in reality, in the new millennium, the most predominant racial mixture among people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry is Asian and Caucasian. According to the 2010 Census, there were 2.6 million people who reported they were Asian and one or more additional races. Of the 2.6 million who reported more than one race, 61 percent identified as Asian and White.<sup>262</sup> More significantly, the majority of the participants within Fulbeck’s *Part Asian 100% Hapa* identify, through the self-descriptions attached to each photograph of the book, as some Caucasian/European ethnic identity (French, German, Irish, British) and some Asian (Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Thai, Indian) ethnic identity. In fact, of the 116 participants approximately 95 declared a European or Caucasian ethnic identity in their self-description; and, Fulbeck himself distinguishes his own racial identity as comprised of Caucasian and Asian ethnicities (British, Irish, and Chinese). Only 25 participants declared their identities as comprised of minority only racial or ethnic identities (non-European/Caucasian ethnic identities). This is particularly significant when we consider Rainer Spencer’s concept of *honorary whiteness*. Spencer argues that certain individuals with mixed racial heritage are able to approach whiteness by wielding a mixed racial identity that distances them from their minority status as racially “other.” Spencer argues that these

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<sup>260</sup> Fulbeck 261.

<sup>261</sup> In his book *Part Asian 100% Hapa*, Kip Fulbeck defines: “ha•pa adj. 1. Slang. Of mixed racial heritage with partial roots in Asian and/or Pacific Islander ancestry.”

<sup>262</sup> See “The Asian Population: 2010” from the *Census Brief: 2010* for more information (4).

individuals are able to experience race comparable to a white ethnic identity (i.e. Irish).<sup>263</sup> In this sense, identifying as a millennial mixed race identity (such as Hapa) is a means to acknowledge multiple origins without the “rigid barrier” created by race in terms of integration, intermarriage, and access to power.<sup>264</sup> These *honorary whites* are able to access all the privileges of whiteness while individuals with “sub-Saharan African ancestry” remain barred from those ivory gates.”<sup>265</sup> Considering the notion of *honorary whiteness* in relation to Hapa identity and the Hapa community is necessary when such large numbers of individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry are in fact identifying as Caucasian and Asian.

The usage of the term *hapa* is not the only way in which whiteness is privileged through Fulbeck’s project. Within the book, the bodies of individual members of the Hapa community appear against a white spatial backdrop; the visual effect is that the viewer’s eye confronts the body’s image itself, but the eye also recognizes the racially ambiguous body contra whiteness, so that a contrast and comparison between white and dark becomes the physical way the eye can make sense of the subject’s racialized body. While in some ways, viewing the racially ambiguous body against whiteness becomes menacing, like Homi Bhabha’s “not quite/not white” and demonstrates the absurdity of the binary between white and dark,<sup>266</sup> the projection of

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<sup>263</sup> Spencer notes the history of Irish identity in the early part of the twentieth century. He argues that Irish immigrants similarly distanced themselves from blackness at the very time that they were most closely associated with Afro-Americans in order to reach for whiteness (109).

<sup>264</sup> See Spencer 110.

<sup>265</sup> Spencer argues that this admittance to *honorary whiteness* is only available to individuals of Asian/Caucasian or Latino/Caucasian heritage. See Spencer *Reproducing Race: The Paradox of Generation Mix* 108.

<sup>266</sup> My use of Bhabha here refers to the way in which mimicry within the colonial situation can actually be an unconscious method of subversion. Even as mimicry is dependent upon the dialectic between colonizer and colonized, the “slippage” that occurs through mimicry actually undermines the power of the colonizer and the dialectic relationship. See Bhabha’s essay “Of

the dark body contra whiteness is also problematic. The literal white backdrop works to darken the subject. In some very significant ways, viewing the racially ambiguous body in such a way replicates what Rainer Spencer refers to as the “primordial relationship,” where whiteness is dependent upon the production of an *other* (blackness), and maintains the existing racial order of white supremacy.<sup>267</sup> With these trappings in mind, claiming a Hapa identity or membership within a Hapa community, such as that created through Fulbeck’s project, is not merely a linguistic declaration; there are real implications of the power of race and racial difference at work within such a proclamation. In order to avoid becoming complicit within a system that continues to devalue Native rights and Blackness, people individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry must understand the ways in which white supremacy and colonialism work within the usage of such millennial mixed race identities as Hapa.

Fulbeck’s project also perpetuates the power of race to distinguish and determine certain bodies by upholding notions of racial essentialism. Fulbeck’s project supports notions of racial essentialism by inviting a form of voyeurism and re-racialization of the racially ambiguous bodies of individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. The visual effect of the photos is that the eye is drawn directly to the body. Although I would not go so far as to say that the images are the same, or similar to the race-science books of “human zoos” that Spickard mentions in the “Afterword,”<sup>268</sup> the body does become an object to be

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Mimicry and Man” in Guarav Desai and Supriya Nair’s *Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism*. (pp. 265-273).

<sup>267</sup> See Spencer (2011) 6.

<sup>268</sup> In the “Afterword,” Paul Spickard argues against what he perceives as misinterpretations of Fulbeck’s project. One of these misinterpretations has to do with drawing a comparison between Fulbeck’s photos and the pseudoscience pictures of “races” from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—where fractions of race were measured by physical features. See Fulbeck 260.



viewed in the photograph. In fact, the primary goal of the work depends on looking, requires it, in order to effect the recognition of *hapaness* as a legitimate racial signifier. Roland Barthes argues that the portrait photo represents a moment when we cease to be a subject and become an object, which is experienced as a “micro-version of death.”<sup>269</sup> Barthes argues in *Camera Lucida* that in the portrait photograph, in becoming the “Total-Image,” “others—the Other—do not dispossess me of myself, they turn me ferociously into an object, they put me at their mercy, at their disposal.”<sup>270</sup> Through Barthes, we can see how the subject loses its sense of agency in the “micro” death of the photo; in the portrait it becomes whatever the viewer makes of it—the subject as object is at the “mercy” of a type of voyeurism. Through this voyeurism, and Fulbeck’s own desire for naturalness—to “makes us look like *us*”<sup>271</sup>—the book re-racializes the body of individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. As Omi and Winant suggest, challenging pre-existing racial ideologies contains a dual process: there is a “*disorganization* of the dominant racial ideology and a *construction* of an alternative, oppositional framework.”<sup>272</sup> So, while the photographs use the body to subvert the idea of an essential monoracial identity located in or on the body, the invitation to view the subject’s body in a “natural” state also suggests a re-inscription of essentialism via a *multiracial* identity that becomes inscribed or located on/in that very body. By reinscribing racial essentialism onto the racially ambiguous bodies of individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry, Fulbeck’s project preserves the power of race to control and govern different bodies.

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<sup>269</sup> Barthes 14.

<sup>270</sup> Barthes 14.

<sup>271</sup> Fulbeck (2006 ) 16; emphasis original.

<sup>272</sup> See Omi and Winant (1994) 89; emphasis original.

While identifying as Hapa may cohere a community and offer a means to assuage the negative affects experienced by individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry, the desire for Hapa identity and Hapa community through Fulbeck's project actually function to preserve white supremacy within the existing racial hierarchy of the United States. Simply calling attention to the ways in which the employment of such a millennial mixed race identity homogenizes differences within the community and supports notions of racial essentialism, colonialism, and white privilege is not enough to deconstruct the power that race has to produce and govern bodies within our society. In fact, in dissecting Fulbeck's project, it becomes clear that the goal of the project to use Hapa identity to alleviate the negative affects experienced by individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry does not actually occur simply through the employment of Hapa identity; rather, the real potential of the project and community to affect change, give affective resolution to individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry, and combat the power of race lies in the way in which the project offers the participants a narrative means to express their identities beyond racial identifiers. The self-expressions written by each participant offer a counternarrative to the dominant language of racial identity and prevailing understanding of racial identity construction based on racialized bodies; in fact, the narrative expressions offer an alternative experience of identity that cannot be garnered through the photos alone nor through the use of millennial mixed race identity terms such as multiracial or Hapa.

The opportunity for self-expression is crucial to subverting some of the major trappings of Fulbeck's project and Hapa identity itself. As previously mentioned, in many ways the photographs in *Part Asian 100% Hapa* work to objectify racially ambiguous bodies and homogenize the Hapa community. As Aaron Allen poignantly claims, "After experiencing a

micro-version of death and crossing over to become the aestheticized object, the participants' ability to write down 'what they are' serves as a process of resurrection."<sup>273</sup> Each photograph is set across from a page where the "object" of the photo is given a chance to reassert its own subject-hood. Rather than being homogenized, as the photos in some ways are, the narratives appear in each subject's own handwriting, complete with spelling and grammatical mistakes, cross outs, pictures, etc. In an interview with Kristen Williamson, Fulbeck states, "We all have this need to tell our own stories and our stories are not being told adequately in the mainstream media."<sup>274</sup> Looking at these self-narratives, Allen claims that it is in a "realm of contradiction that Fulbeck's participants appear to be most at ease"<sup>275</sup> suggesting a belief (perhaps echoing Fulbeck) that recognizing and understanding the spaces of ambiguity between racial categories is paramount in alleviating the negative feelings these individuals have experienced at the hands of the power of race. However, the idea that all the participants feel comfortable with racial ambiguity is merely a further homogenization of people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry, since as we see in the self-descriptions not all the participants seem to be "at ease" with this space of liminality; and, more importantly, this belief about the participant's ease with racial ambiguity foregrounds race (as ambiguity) as the loci of identity. In this sense, the narratives as expressions of (racial) ambiguity continue to uphold the power of race to define bodies in the U.S. However, the representations of the self-narratives via the subject's own handwriting can also be read as another means by which the body is put into language; it is the literal image of a body's own language on the page. And, while some of these

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<sup>273</sup> Allen (2010) 5.

<sup>274</sup> See Williamson 2008.

<sup>275</sup> Allen (2010) 6. Allen reiterates a claim made by Fulbeck that claims individuals constantly "seek out absolutes" (in this case racial absolutes), but that "ambiguity" is what is most interesting (Fulbeck 13).

bodies' language simply reinforces the reiterative power of discourse<sup>276</sup> to produce racialized bodies along the reimagined lines of alternative racial identities, other narratives resist this power of discourse to demarcate their bodies in *any* such way. It is, in fact, these self-descriptions reproduced in the body's own language that provide the objects of (Hapa) representation with a voice to narrate and "do" their own sense of identity—one that not only opposes the fixity of the photographic image, but also works to destabilize the centrality of racial identity itself and the power that race has to govern their bodies.

Although the narratives of self are discursively constructed, many of them use language to assert a notion of identity that destabilizes the current preoccupation with rigid racial identity categories (including Hapa). Some participants choose to highlight identity as affective force through fluctuation or tension. One participant claims, "I am constantly debating whether the Chinese half is better than the Vietnamese half;"<sup>277</sup> another participant states, "Some days I'm very Malay. Other days I'm more 'white,' American, whatever. But on certain special days, I'm both. These are the best."<sup>278</sup> Although these narratives are unable to abandon the poststructuralist preoccupation with identity categories, the narratives do insinuate the day-to-day flexibility of self. It is important to note that this flexibility may not be equally available to all individuals who identify as mixed race (for instance a person who identifies as Black and Asian) and may actually be available to these particular bodies because of a combination of white privilege and the perception of Asians as model minorities. Regardless, on the one hand, the narratives express the idea of feeling more or less connected to one part or another part of the

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<sup>276</sup> See Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity and Bodies that Matter*.

<sup>277</sup> Fulbeck 60.

<sup>278</sup> Fulbeck 174.

self at any given moment and the notion that these connective feelings continuously fluctuate. On the other hand, these narratives express a notion of tension in relation to self; there seems to be almost a battle occurring within the self. In both tension and fluctuation, these narratives highlight an affective force and recursive element to identity formation—the feeling of (dis)connection—the push and pull—to parts of the self.

Some narratives in *Part Asian 100% Hapa* depict a sense of self by highlighting affective experience. One child simply drew a picture of a person with the word “MAD” next to it.<sup>279</sup> While this child may, in fact, be too young to comprehend the project in which he is a participant and that this affective response is supposed to be about his sense of identity, his picture and attending message exemplify the centrality of affect in our psyches. A more mature participant writes: “In high school I was the surly girl all in black with Nine Inch Nails lyrics scrawled across my binder...In college I was the super-smart stoner who tried to from myself and anyone who loved me...Now I’m 24, in love with life, happy to be wherever I am (unless I’m at the DMV)...”<sup>280</sup> This woman’s narrative of self focuses on how she felt at various points in her life. This trajectory of affect works to highlight how a sense of self is created through affective experience over and through time.<sup>281</sup> Another participant writes: “When I was a kid, I was teased for being “different,” but when I got older it was the best thing that ever happened to me. When I have my baby girl in a few months, I will teach her to be very proud of being “hapa-hapa-haole.”<sup>282</sup> Again, this participant eventually reverts back into labeling a millennial mixed race identity, but her own sense of self is primarily explained as affective experience over time and

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<sup>279</sup> Fulbeck 82.

<sup>280</sup> She continues: “trying to make sense of the wonderland that is the world, maintaining a sunny disposition and a great natural tan” (Fulbeck 32).

<sup>281</sup> This is a point that we will explore further in our next chapter.

<sup>282</sup> Fulbeck 142.

into a future. Each of these participants depicts the way in which identifications and sense-of-self shift over time and through different affective experiences.

Other narratives in *Part Asian 100% Hapa* promote affective connections of kinship as the primary means by which their identities can be understood. One participant writes: “I am Yes. An American kid who celebrates Hanukkah with his Jewish stepfather, prays to Buddha with his Buddhist momma, and then goes to midnight mass with his Christian Father.”<sup>283</sup> Here, the participant highlights the familial bonds as the focal point of his narrative of self. His understanding of his identity is connected to the poststructuralist identity terms of religion; however, each religious identity he inhabits is actually explained as an affective attachment to one of the members of his immediate family. A second participant writes: I am a Nisei mom’s obsession to prove democracy’s eventual triumph. I am the privilege of freedom—a white man walking away from whiteness. I am World War II. After internment, my mom moved to Chicago where she met my WWII veteran dad. I am the world opening up. I am my parents defying war’s prejudice & confusion by making babies to love.”<sup>284</sup> While this participant continues to claim, “I am mixed” asserting a racialized identity term, her sense of identity is detailed in three paragraphs about her parents (their relationship, their dreams for her, their love, their experiences of racism) and only one that asserts an identity term. Her focus on her parents demonstrates the centrality of the affective attachments she has to her parents in shaping her sense of self. Another participant claims: “My parents + grandparents have many stories of making paths, and following paths, + crossing paths. I come from whalers, trappers, adventurers,

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<sup>283</sup> Fulbeck 76.

<sup>284</sup> Fulbeck 98.

nomads—all trails lead to a point: me.”<sup>285</sup> This participant’s focus on affective connection not only resists the centrality of poststructuralist identity terms but also emphasizes the role of movement, time, and space in understanding a sense of self. This woman does not describe her identity in terms of race, but rather describes her sense of self through movement and time—she is the end of a path, a point at the end of a trail, a descendent of nomads and adventurers. Her narrative describes “paths” of kinship (of affective connection) that have led to the creation of her self; she has become a one of many. Another participant writes: “I am my mother’s driving passion and my father’s steady reason...in a BATTLE TO THE DEATH.”<sup>286</sup> Rather than describing her identity as dependent on racial categories or as a product of racial essentialism, this participant describes her identity as a clash of character inherited from her parents. Again, this participant highlights a feeling of affective attachment to her parents through her decision to include an expression of each of their personalities within her narrative of self. Each of these narratives highlights the affective attachments of kinship (in this case, the family). For each of these participants, the poststructuralist concern of naming a racial identity becomes subordinate to affective connection as each participant identifies the self in relation to his/her connection to family.

Rather than focusing on the way in which affective value is accumulated through kinship feelings for the identity category Hapa,<sup>287</sup> focusing on the significance of affective connections and experiences within the narratives themselves in establishing a sense of self provides an

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<sup>285</sup> Fulbeck 78.

<sup>286</sup> Fulbeck 92.

<sup>287</sup> This was discussed earlier in the chapter as a means to understand how Hapa identity and Hapa community work to alleviate the negative affects that individuals who identify as mixed race and identify as having partial Asian/American or Pacific Islander ancestry experience in relation to racial identity.

alternative method for understanding identity construction beyond the poststructuralist preoccupation with identity categories (especially racial categories). In *The Feeling of Kinship* David Eng considers how affect might be used to “reformulate questions of identity, family, and kinship in our colorblind age.”<sup>288</sup> While we certainly do not live in a colorblind age, Eng’s proposal for a means to reformulate identity through affect is certainly crucial when we recognize the failure of identity labels to “grasp fully our subjectivities.”<sup>289</sup> Eng articulates the predominance of poststructuralism’s understanding of identity formation as anchored in discourse,<sup>290</sup> which is replicated in Kip Fulbeck’s project and its promotion of a Hapa identity. Eng continues, that while the “practice of intersectionality has sought to address this critical impasse by providing an account of the ways in which identity is simultaneously constituted through multiple axes of difference,” identity is still largely examined “within linguistic traditions of poststructuralism” instead of the “diverse and convergent modes of affective recognition and particularity.”<sup>291</sup>

Our previous discussion about the way in which negative affects accumulate over time through different experiences of misrecognition (for Lennon and Fulbeck), is an example of how affect can provide an alternative method for imagining identity construction. More specifically, this perspective dwells in the failures of not only the state-sponsored recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity but also the failures of the more intimate recognitions of everyday encounters. In accessing the failures of recognition, this affective angle disrupts the power that

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<sup>288</sup> Eng (2010) 189.

<sup>289</sup> Eng 189-190.

<sup>290</sup> Eng argues that the poststructuralist view understands identity formation to be anchored in discourse. He says, “We have grown accustomed, for instance, to describing our identities as linguistically inscribed, as discursive positions, as interpellative events” (189).

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.



race has to control bodies in the United States and the power of heteronormative time by highlighting how identity is influenced by the accumulation of affect and affective experiences (and the future anticipations of those affects) over the course of one's life, rather than racial categories or phenotypical features. As we discussed, however, both Lennon and Fulbeck do not seize the opportunity of these moments of failure to offer an alternative mode of seeing or being in the world and simply use these moments of affective experience in the service of constructing an alternative, discursive identity category (Hapa).

While Lennon's and Fulbeck's own narratives may not take advantage of the failure of recognition, exploring the participants' narratives within Fulbeck's project begins to uncover how we can leverage the failure of both the Mixed Race Identity Movement and the more intimate forms of recognition of everyday encounters to destabilize the power of race to differentiate and demarcate bodies and the racial hierarchy that unfolds from this structuring of power. Examining these narratives not only suggests a means by which identity can be understood as organized along "multiple axes of difference;" but more significantly, an exploration of these narratives highlights identity's constitution through the affective connections and experiences of everyday life. As discussed, some of the narratives depict identity as fluid and fluctuating—as a push and pull of affective connection; other narratives represent a sense of self as completely dependent upon the affective connections of kinship (the family); and other narratives show identity as affective experience that constructs a sense of self over time. While Kip Fulbeck's *Part Asian 100% Hapa* has claimed to deconstruct race by promoting a Hapa identity and a Hapa community that shifts the predominance of the black/white color line in the American psyche, the identity and community created and emphasized by the book actually work to support notions of white supremacy and racial hierarchy through colonialism; conflate Asians,

Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders, and sustain the colonization of Native people; and, reproduce racial stratification and reify the power of race to differentiate bodies. However, the personal narratives contained within the book hold the potential for real deconstructive power that I would like to explore further in the following chapter. These narratives emphasize identity formation as the nexus of an affective web formed through the affective connections and experiences that occur over time and in different spaces; thus, destabilizing the supremacy of poststructuralist understandings of identity that maintain racial hierarchy through a reification and reorganization of racial categorization.

## **Affective Revelations: Racial Affect and the Significance of Encounter**

As we saw in the previous chapter, even after the implementation of a state-sponsored multiracial identifier on the National Census in 2000, in the new millennium individuals who identify as mixed race and as having partial Asian/Asian American ancestry continue to seek solace to combat the experiences of isolation, misrecognition, and invisibility they experience in relation to their racial identities. In the first chapter, attention to affect uncovered an undertheorized facet of the Mixed Race Identity Movement and provided a reconceptualization of the emergence of this particular movement and subsequent formation of Millennial Mixed Race Identities in the new millennium. Also, more crucially, the chapter helped to illuminate the continued investments in race and racial identities, how deeply intertwined race is with our understandings of self and kinship (specifically the supposed biological inheritance of racial identity), and how affect circulates within our social system in the service of white supremacy and racial hierarchies. In the second chapter, an attention to affect revealed the continued drives of a specific subgroup of individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry who continue to express feelings of misrecognition, isolation, and invisibility even after the implementation of a state-sponsored recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity. Focusing on Hapa identity and the Hapa community constructed through Kip Fulbeck's *Part Asian 100% Hapa*, the chapter not only depicted the continued accumulation of negative affects in relation to millennial mixed race identity, but also showed the affective value of identities and communities constructed around millennial mixed race identities such as Hapa. Rather than taking the opportunity of the failure of the state-sponsored recognition to disrupt the power of race, heteronormativity, white supremacy, and colonialism, Fulbeck and others who promote or

desire alternative Millennial Mixed Race Identities merely replicate these structures of power by seeking out these more intimate forms of recognition to alleviate their affective conditions. In so doing, as we discussed at length in the previous chapters, both Millennial Mixed Race Identity (more broadly) and Hapa identity (specifically) work to: support white supremacy, racial hierarchies, and racial essentialism; uphold colonialism through the conflation of Asians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders; maintain colonialism through the erasure of the specific ways in which mixed race has been used against Native people in the United States in the dispossession of their lands and against African Americans in the perpetuation of slavery; and, reproduce racial stratification and reify the power of race to differentiate bodies in the United States.

Acknowledging similar critiques to those made in the previous chapters of this dissertation, as we move further into the new millennium there appears to be a growing divide within the community of people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. On the one hand, there are a number of individuals who continue to use the identifier Hapa; and on the other hand, there are a growing number of individuals, myself included, who question the continued viability of identifications such as Hapa, as well the continued value of Millennial Mixed Race Identities more generally. This divide was evidenced at the most recent CMRS Conference held on February 24-26, 2017 at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and was notably realized during a roundtable discussion on Editing Transnational Literatures on February 24, 2017. During this roundtable Duncan Ryuken Williams discussed his collection *Hapa Japan*, one of the biggest publications marketed at the conference (which was co-hosted by USC Shinso Ito Center for Japanese Religions and Culture and the Hapa Japan Festival); echoing Kip Fulbeck, Williams promoted the identity label Hapa as empowering

because it helps to create an “us” and acts as a “brand” that is “potentially broadening” because it offers a means by which an individual can feel validated in his/her identity as well as validated as a part of a community.<sup>292</sup> In reaction to Williams’s investment in Hapa identity, many of the audience members voiced their hesitation with using the identifier Hapa after listening to critiques made by both Afropessimist and kanaka maoli scholars.<sup>293</sup>

Although there has been a trend in academia to critique the usage of millennial mixed race identities (such as Hapa), it becomes evident from the surge in blogs, websites, and publications that although Hapa identity has lost some of its currency in academia, it has not done so in the public discourse of millennial mixed race identity. In fact, it seems to have secured a position as a “ready identity”<sup>294</sup> for individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. Borrowing this concept of “ready identity” from the work of Jillian Paragg, I want to highlight the way in which this identity label (Hapa) becomes a sort of stand-in, or shorthand, for the “lived experiences” of race. In her work, Jillian Paragg focuses more clearly on the story of the “ready identity narrative” as an “iterative outcome of lived experiences” with a racializing gaze for people who identify as mixed race. While her emphasis on narrative is able to capture a conceptualization of millennial mixed race identities as iterative

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<sup>292</sup> These comments are paraphrased from the roundtable discussion on Editing Transnational Literatures at the Critical Mixed Race Studies Conference held at The University of Southern California on February 24, 2017.

<sup>293</sup> See Rainer Spencer, Jared Sexton, and Michelle Elam for examples of Afropessimist critiques against multiracial identity. See Wei-Ming Dariotis’s “Hapa: The Word of Power” for an overview of the Native Hawaiian claims against Hapa identity.

<sup>294</sup> “Ready identity” is a term that I borrow from Canadian scholar Jillian Paragg. Paragg employs the term “ready identity narrative” to explain the narrative that people who identify as mixed race construct as an “iterative outcome” of the “lived experiences” from their encounter with what Paragg calls the “multiracializing gaze.” See Paragg “The Lived Experience of the Multiracializing Gaze” (1-3). Borrowing from Paragg, I use the term “ready identity” to refer to the way in which this identity label becomes a sort of shorthand that actually erases all the lived experiences of the actual narrative.

and recursive (as we also discussed in the previous chapter and will continue to discuss in this chapter); the employment of such “ready identities” in moments of racial encounter do not actually contain this same notion of process. In fact, as we discussed in the previous chapter, Hapa identity holds affective value precisely because it rearticulates race via newly augmented categorization that accounts for this millennial mixed race identity without a narrative of having to explain one’s self. In this sense, the “ready identity” actually works to collapse the notion of identity as experiential and recursive and secures an identity of fixity in its place.

Well into the new millennium, Hapa identity has obtained a position as a “ready identity” in the popular consciousness of the United States. In 2010, *Hapavoice.com* was first published granting individuals who identify as Hapa around the world a place to come together and blog about their experiences in relation to racial identity. This website continues to receive and publish new narratives every day.<sup>295</sup> In 2014, NPR’s *Code Switch: Race and Identity Remixed* featured an article entitled “‘Half Asian’? ‘Half White’? No—Hapa” by journalist Alex Laughlin wherein the author proudly asserts a Hapa identity.<sup>296</sup> Another site dedicated to millennial mixed race identities, *The Mash-up Americans*, featured an article by writer Tanya Tarr in 2015 entitled “How I found My Way to Hapa” wherein the author negotiates her different identifications and proudly asserts herself as Hapa.<sup>297</sup> Most recently in 2016, another photographic project *I am Hapa* by Crystal Smith and Michael Satoshi Garcia was published. This project is similar to the original *Hapa Project* by Kip Fulbeck but focuses exclusively on children and families.

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<sup>295</sup> The site claims that *Hapavoice.com* “features the stories of multiracial, multicultural Asians living around the world. It’s a place for us to connect, share our experiences, and celebrate our cultures.” Retrieved 3 Mar. 2017. Web.

<sup>296</sup> See “Code Switch: Race and Identity Remixed” at *NPR.org* 15 Dec. 2014. Accessed 3 Mar. 2017. Web.

<sup>297</sup> See “How I Found My Way to Hapa” at *Mashupamericans.com* published 6 Oct. 2015. Accessed 4 Mar. 2017.

With this continued investment in “ready identities” such as Hapa (especially in popular culture), it becomes apparent that we cannot just rid ourselves of millennial mixed race identities, multiracial discourse, or mixed race politics any more than we can of racial discourse, more generally, and racism. Notions of millennial mixed race identity have made their foothold in the American consciousness and are seemingly here to stay. As we move further away from the Mixed Race Identity Movement and internalize the critiques made against this movement and other specific identities such as Hapa, it becomes clear that there must be a reconceptualization of mixed race identifications and politics if it is ever to seriously participate in antiracist discourse (not merely postracial discourse). This reformulation is particularly crucial in the face of the recent rise of white supremacist discourse in popular culture and politics since Trump’s ascendance. In order for people who identify as mixed race with Asian/American ancestry to avoid complicity within a racial system that devalues blackness and aggrandizes whiteness, people who identify in such a way must reconsider their own positioning and desires within the racial structure of the United States and generate a more substantial kinship with minority groups.

This reconceptualization is especially crucial for individuals who identify as mixed race with Asian/American ancestry due to the group’s continual growth and demographic composition. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, in the 2010 census, the “Asian-alone-or-in-combination population” increased at “faster rate than all other race groups in the country;”<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> According to the “The Asian Population: 2010” from the *Census Brief 2010, Asian in combination* is the term used by the Census for individuals who report Asian and one or more other racial categories in the racial identity question on the census. This category is differentiated from *Asian alone* category where individuals only reported Asian as their racial group. See Census.gov for definitions. The Census reports that the *Asian alone* category grew at a rate four times faster than the total U.S. population in 2010 and that the *Asian-alone-or-in-*

the people who identified as “Asian in combination” were among the three largest “multiple-race groups;”<sup>299</sup> those reporting specifically “Asian *and* White” account for more than half of the “Asian in combination” group;<sup>300</sup> and, lastly, those reporting “Asian *and* Black” was the fastest-growing minority-minority combination group.<sup>301</sup> More specifically, the population of individuals who identified as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry increased by over one million people between the Census 2000 and Census 2010, putting the current reported population of individuals who identify as “Asian in combination”<sup>302</sup> at 2.6 million individuals in 2010.<sup>303</sup> Understanding this growth rate in combination with the increased rate of growth for the “Asian Population” more generally and with the fact that more than half of the total population who reported “Asian in combination” (1.6 million or approximately 61 percent) reported specifically Asian *and* White,<sup>304</sup> it becomes crucial for an immediate reformulation of Millennial

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*combination* group experienced a slightly growth. See “The Asian Population: 2010” from the *Census Brief 2010* for these numbers (2-3).

<sup>299</sup> The other groups that experienced the highest rate of growth were people who reported *White and Black*, people who reported and *White and Some Other Race*. See “The Two Or More Races Population: 2010” from the *Census Brief 2010* (5). According to the Census report there was an error that occurred in the processing of data involving *Two or More Races* population. The report notes that this miscalculation resulted in an overestimation of the total population reporting *Two or More Races* by about 1 million people nationally. The report clarifies that the error “almost entirely affected race combinations involving the *Some Other Race* indicator. Therefore, the report warns that data users should instead look at specific race combinations such as “White and Asian” or “Black and Asian” to examine population changes. See “The Two Or More Races Population: 2010” from the *Census Brief 2010* (3-4).

<sup>300</sup> See the “The Asian Population: 2010” from the *Census Brief 2010* (4).

<sup>301</sup> See “The Two Or More Races Population: 2010” from the *2010 Census Brief* (9)

<sup>302</sup> According to the “The Asian Population: 2010” from the *Census Brief 2010*, *Asian in combination* is the term used by the Census for individuals who report Asian and one or more other racial categories in the racial identity question on the census. This category is differentiated from *Asian alone* category where individuals only reported Asian as their racial group. See Census.gov for definitions. <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-11.pdf>

<sup>303</sup> See this dissertation Ch.2 page 4-5 for more information.

<sup>304</sup> See the “The Asian Population: 2010” from the *Census Brief 2010* (4).



Mixed Race Identity in relation to this particular population. Based on the numbers above, it is safe to assume that individuals will continue to deploy and desire “ready identities” such as Hapa that perpetuate investments in colonialism, white supremacy, and antiblackness unless we restructure the ways in which millennial mixed race identities and discourse operate in order to challenge these structures of power.

Some scholars believe that a reconceptualization of mixed race identification for people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry simply entails modifying Hapa as an identifier or finding a new signifier for this particular group. Scholar Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu suggests in *When Half Is Whole: Multiethnic Asian American Identities* “whether we can use it [Hapa] with an inclusive meaning, not as ‘our’ term signifying mixed Asian, but with a broader understanding that acknowledges where it came from by including mixed Native Hawaiians in its definition.”<sup>305</sup> This alteration in the linguistic boundaries of the definition of Hapa is problematic for a number of reasons. Primarily, this redistricting of Hapa identity merely replicates the forms of colonization raised by *kanaka maoli* (discussed in the previous chapter) in the first place.

Secondly, it is increasingly important to remain precise about who chooses to use the “ready identity” of Hapa or other Millennial Mixed Race Identities and who does not. In point of fact (as mentioned above), the largest subgroup to identify this way on the most recent census report specifically reported *Asian and Caucasian* as their racial groups.<sup>306</sup> Understanding that the largest group to identify as “Asian in combination” also reports Caucasian is highly significant because of the pervasiveness of white supremacy and racial hierarchization in the social system

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<sup>305</sup> See Murphy-Shigematsu 93.

<sup>306</sup> See the “The Asian Population: 2010” from the Census Brief 2010” (4).

of the United States that may necessitate a desire for honorary whiteness<sup>307</sup> (as discussed in the previous chapter) rather than kinship with minority racial groups.

Lastly, modifying Hapa as Murphy-Shigematsu suggests to include both kanaka maoli and Asian Americans is a continued conflation of kanaka maoli with Asian Americans that not only perpetuates settler colonialism, but has real material consequences for kanaka maoli. This conflation skews the data of the kanaka maoli population and causes very real damages. In contrast to the 1.6 million or approximately 61 percent who reported specifically Asian *and* White on the most recent census,<sup>308</sup> according to the “Asian Population” data those who reported “Asian and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander” were approximately 6 percent with another 5 percent who reported “Asian and White and Native Hawaiian.”<sup>309</sup> While the number of individuals reporting Asian *and* White increased significantly between the two census reports, the number of individuals reporting Asian *and* Native Hawaiian seems to have decreased while the group reporting Asian *and* White *and* Native Hawaiian seems to have remained the same.<sup>310</sup> If we were to merely look at the data of kanaka maoli population from the perspective of the Asian American population data (replicating the conflation Murphy-Shigematsu suggests), there would be a gross misreading of the actual kanaka maoli population. According to the “The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Population: 2010” from the 2010 Census Briefs, the total population of individuals who reported Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (NHPI) on the 2010

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<sup>307</sup> See chapter 2 of this dissertation for more on honorary whiteness.

<sup>308</sup> See the “The Asian Population: 2010” from the Census Brief 2010” (4).

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> See the “The Asian Population: 2010” from the Census Brief 2010” (5). There is a note on the graph that notes an error in data processing in the 2000 census which overestimated the Two or More Races population in 2000 making “observed changes in the Two or More Races population and race combinations involving Some Other Race” to be observed with caution (5). Combinations not involving “Some Other Race” such as those included in this dissertation such as “Asian and White” are generally more comparable according to this note.

Census was 0.4 percent of the total population of the United States totaling about 1.2 million people.<sup>311</sup> This total includes 0.2 percent who reported “NHPI alone” and an additional 0.2 percent who reported “NHPI in combination.”<sup>312</sup> Of this total 1.2 million, approximately 56 percent reported “NHPI in combination” while 44 percent reported “NHPI alone.”<sup>313</sup> The “NHPI alone” category increased “three times faster than the total U.S. population” for an increase of 35 percent and total of 540,000 people up from 399,000 in 2000.<sup>314</sup> The “NHPI in combination” group grew by approximately 40 percent from 874, 000 in 2000 to 1.2 million in 2010.<sup>315</sup> Of the “NHPI in combination” group, there was “a fairly even distribution” between NHPI *and* White, NHPI *and* Asian, and NHPI *and* White *and* Asian.<sup>316</sup> If we simply look at the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander groups from the perspective of Asian/Americans (replicating a form of settler colonialism) we miss the increasing population of individuals who identify as *kanaka maoli*. In the data, the *kanaka maoli* population seems to have decreased or stayed the same if we only look at the category of “Asian in combination” with Native Hawaiians; however, according to the NHPI data, Native Hawaiians in the 2010 Census became the largest detailed NHPI group in the United States and increased its population to 527,000.<sup>317</sup> It is especially

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<sup>311</sup> See p.4 of “The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Population: 2010” from the 2010 Census Briefs published May 2010. <https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-12.pdf>

<sup>312</sup> Definitions for the categories “Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Alone” and “Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander In Combination” can be found on page 3 of “The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Population: 2010” report. According to the Census a “Race Alone” category is for those who report only one racial category, while “race in Combination” is for those reporting one or more racial categories. These are similar to the categories discussed previously in this dissertation for “Asian Alone” and “Asian in Combination.”

<sup>313</sup> See “The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Population: 2010” (4).

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> See “The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Population: 2010” (5).

<sup>317</sup> This was true for both the alone population and the alone-or-in any-combination population. See the “The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Population: 2010” report (15).

important to acknowledge this increase in population because it has very real consequences in terms of land rights as kanaka maoli actively fight their continued colonization seeking sovereignty from the United States. It is also significant to note that many kanaka maoli may not find it advantageous to identify as mixed race, and may choose to only identify as Native Hawaiian/kanaka maoli, due to the struggles for land and resources, as well as other decolonial efforts, that have been denied to them precisely based on blood quantum in the past.

In another attempt to reformulate millennial mixed race identity for people who identify as such with partial Asian/American ancestry, leading scholar Wei-Ming Dariotis has more decidedly abandoned Hapa as a ready identity, but still insists on finding some alternate signifier for millennial mixed race identification in order to preserve the kinship found in group identification. In 2007, Dariotis ended her essay “Hapa: The Word of Power” with the quest of “find[ing] a name we can all love calling ourselves and that also causes no one else pain.”<sup>318</sup> Interestingly, Dariotis focuses on the affective effects (the pain) rather than on the material consequences of linguistic colonization caused by the word Hapa. While seemingly empathetic, this focus on affect delegitimizes the very real concerns launched by kanaka maoli by turning what was political into a devalued position of personal feelings. In this sense, even her suggestion to find a new term is a perpetuation of the forms of settler colonialism that she was critiqued for supporting in the first place.

At the most recent CMRS<sup>319</sup> Conference, I heard a number of identifiers used including: (the more generalized) mixed race, Hafu (Japanese mixed race), Blasian (Black and Asian), and Yonsei (the generational name for Japanese fourth generation). While “ready identities” such as

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> Critical Mixed Race Studies

those listed above offer a short and easy way to identify as millennial mixed race, in reality, identities are not neat or easy. Identification *is* work and occurs over a lifetime of messy and entangled experiences with race and racial categories.

Deconstructing Hapa or other Millennial Mixed Race Identities must be about more than a linguistic shift. Although some labels (such as mixed race or Hapa) have material consequences for groups such as kanaka maoli, finding another identity label is not a solution. Rather than focusing on ready identity labels, I believe a real reformulation of millennial mixed race identification must include a reconsideration of the processes of identification; I believe it is understanding this development of identity (not the identity itself) that will provide the best path to subverting structures of power such as white supremacy, colonialism, and antiblackness. Furthermore, I believe that if affect has been the key to understanding the continued investments in millennial mixed race identities well into the millennium as we saw in the previous chapters, then perhaps it also the linchpin to reconceptualizing it. Affect can unlock the layered complexities of our identifications. In the previous chapters, we focused on affective moments and the accumulation of negative affects that led to a desire for positive affect achieved through a ready identity label. Rather than focusing on an end result (such as the ready identities of Millennial Mixed Race Identities) and the positive affective value that this end offers the individual, affect also allows us to engage more deeply with the failures of identity and race. Affect allows us to emphasize the affective moments (or encounters) that occur over a lifetime and shape the way in which we think of others and ourselves in the world.

Ahmed's approach to phenomenology<sup>320</sup> is particularly enlightening for reconceptualizing millennial mixed race identifications that have previously been so preoccupied with discourses of recognition. Ahmed highlights throughout her book *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Object, Others* that bodies take shape through their orientations in time and space. For Ahmed the idea of orientation highlights the entanglement of the bodily, the spatial, and the social.<sup>321</sup> What becomes particularly useful for my own reconceptualization of mixed race identification is the way in which Ahmed's approach to phenomenology emphasizes recursivity and repetition in the shaping of bodies (which we can also understand as the shaping of identifications). In her earlier work, Ahmed also developed another key element to reconceptualizing mixed race identifications away from the anxiety of recognition. In *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Postcoloniality*, Ahmed underscores the significance and layered complexities of moments of encounter. Both Ahmed's approach to phenomenology and her approach to the encounter are useful tools in reformulating millennial mixed race identification because they allow us to focus on the failures of recognition that have hitherto been the source of anxiety and negative affect resulting in the straight (heteronormative) line toward the ultimate end-goal of recognition.

In this chapter I will bring together Ahmed's approaches and focus on affect and identification in two related ways. First, I will concentrate on the ways in which racial affect circulates within our society and attaches to differently raced bodies in moments of racial encounter. Examining racial affect in this way will allow us to understand the ways in which the process of millennial mixed race identification occurs over a lifetime and through constant and

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<sup>320</sup> See Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Object, Others* (2006)

<sup>321</sup> Ibid 2.

reiterative contact with other racial bodies. This understanding of race and identity disrupts our heteronormative understandings of time in relation to millennial mixed race identity. Habiba Ibrahim has argued that multiracial discourse has predominantly reinforced a heteronormative concept of time through its focus on the family and multiracial children.<sup>322</sup> Borrowing Halberstam's concept of reproductive temporality, Ibrahim notes that in becoming synonymous with familial time multiracial discourse has ordered its subjects according to "a naturalized sequence of maturity" that has "privileged" the time of adulthood.<sup>323</sup> Ibrahim specifically notes that within multiracial discourse, this reliance on normative familial time worked to naturalize a discourse of recognition whereby multiracial children were not granted full agency until the future.<sup>324</sup> As we discussed in the previous chapters, the discourse of state-sponsored recognition in the Mixed Race Identity Movement and the discourse of more intimate forms of recognition via millennial mixed race identities, such as Hapa, also support this linear sequencing of time by positioning affective value in the end-goal of recognition. Reformulating mixed race identification through affect allows for a disruption of this normative sequencing by concentrating on the iterative and reflexive nature of the process of identity formation through many repeated encounters of race.

Secondly, focusing on how racial affect circulates in a society and attaches to different bodies in moments of racial encounter also allows individuals who may believe themselves to be detached from histories of colonialism or antiblackness to understand how these histories inform all encounters in everyday life. This is particularly relevant for people who identify as mixed

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<sup>322</sup> See Habiba Ibrahim's *Troubling the Family* (19).

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid. Ibrahim notes that, "adults were the agents who developed a discourse of recognition for their own interracial intimacy and for their incipient multiracial children, who would not be granted full agency until the future."

race with partial Asian/American ancestry given the majority of this population also identified as Caucasian. In bringing to the forefront the ways in which histories of race inform all encounters, there is a possibility of disrupting white supremacy along with heteronormative structuring of time. Understanding how racial affect moves through society and influences moments of encounter, brings various points of multiple racial histories into the present moment of encounter thereby interrupting the notion of racial progress. If we can highlight and understand how these encounters are suffused with histories of race, we can also develop an affective connection to differently raced bodies. Perhaps, this cultivation of affective connection can help individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry avoid complicity in structures of colonialism and white supremacy by understanding their affective ties to other racialized bodies.<sup>325</sup>

Understanding how our sense of self is constantly shaped through our contact with other bodies, other spaces, and other times is a particularly relevant approach for people who identify as mixed race because of the constant confrontation with questions about racial identity in our everyday encounters. While these interrogations of racial identity may seem to occur in benign interactions, Jillian Paragg argues that the constant repetition of questions about racial identity over a lifetime cause the identity narrative to constantly shift, mutate, and evolve. While this is true for all racial identities to be sure, the way in which people who identify as mixed race are constantly approached with these interrogations in benign encounters highlights the ways in which these interactions are central to our formulations of identity narratives.

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<sup>325</sup> Although this affective connection may disrupt white supremacy via relationality; we must remember Ahmed's warnings: "To *become* black through proximity to others is not to *be* black." (2006) 128.



As a way to elaborate my reconceptualization of mixed race identification as a process of multiple encounters influenced by various histories, bodies, times, and spaces and to develop my concept of racial affect; this chapter will use as an example one of the more widely known recent examples of life writing focused on people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry: *When Half is Whole: Multiethnic Asian American Identities* by Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu. Since the rise of the Mixed Race Identity Movement in the 1980s, the genre of life writing has established a firm legacy within the field of Critical Mixed Race Studies because writers have used the genre to highlight mixed race politics and/or to claim their mixed race identities. Around the inception of the Mixed Race Identity Movement, this genre was dominated by white mothers of differently raced children who used the maternal memoir as a political strategy “for legitimating the affective ties and cultural value”<sup>326</sup> of recently “legally legitimate families.”<sup>327</sup> In fact, multiracial politics at the turn of the millennium was heavily reliant on the genre of life writing to voice its central agendas. Some of these maternal memoirs include: *Beyond the Whiteness of Whiteness: Memoir of a White Mother of Black Sons* by Jane Lazarre (1997); *From Black to Biracial: Transforming Racial Identity Among Americans* by Kathleen Korgen (1999); *The Interracial Experience: Growing Up Black/White Racially Mixed in the United States* by Ursula Brown (2001); *Secret Daughter: A Mixed-Race Daughter and the Mother That Gave Her Away* by June Cross (2007); and, *Is That Your Child? Mothers Talk About Raising Biracial Children* by Marion Kilson and Florence Ladd (2009).

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<sup>326</sup> These are issues we discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation.

<sup>327</sup> See Ibrahim for a full analysis of the ways in which the white maternal memoir became a tool of political action for many of the leading figures of the Multiracial Identity Movement (85). She argues that the 1967 Supreme Court decision of *Loving v. Virginia* is a marker by which multiracial families became recognized as legitimate by the law.

Along with these maternal memoirs, many individuals who saw themselves as mixed race used the genre of life writing to assert their own mixed race identities and share their experiences during their development of this mixed race identity. These include: *Dreams From My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* by Barack Obama (1995); *The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother* by James McBride (1997); *What Are You?: Voices of Mixed Race Young People* by Pearl Fuyo Gaskins (1999); *Black, White, Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self* by Rebecca Walker (2002);<sup>328</sup> *Mixed: Multiracial College Students Tell Their Life Stories* edited by Andrew Garrod (2013); and *The Beiging of America: Personal Narratives About Being Mixed Race in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2017). Additionally, there are a number of contemporary websites and blogs encouraging participants to post autobiographical narratives centered on Millennial Mixed Race Identity, including: [Mixedrootstories.com](http://Mixedrootstories.com), [Swirlnationblog.com](http://Swirlnationblog.com), and [Themash.com](http://Themash.com).

The same tendency to employ life writing is seen in the smaller subset group of people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. Since the rise of the Mixed Race Identity Movement, examples of life writing within this particular subset include: *Half + Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural* edited by Claudine Chiawei O'Hearn (1998); *Paper Bullets: A Fictional Autobiography* by Kip Fulbeck (2001); *Part Asian 100% Hapa* by Kip Fulbeck (2006); *Hapa Girl* by May-lee Chai (2007); and *Black Lotus: A Woman's Search for Racial Identity* by Sil Lao Abrams (2016). There are also websites and blogs with this focus: [Hapavoice.com](http://Hapavoice.com), [Halfasianpeople.com](http://Halfasianpeople.com), [Mesohapa.com](http://Mesohapa.com), and [Thehapablog.tumblr.com](http://Thehapablog.tumblr.com).

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<sup>328</sup> Some critics argue this work to be more fictional autobiography. See Gino Michael Pellegrini's Dissertation *American Mixed-Race Literature: Cultural History, Precursors, Identities, and Forms of Expression* from Purdue University published in 2004.

With the growing number of individuals who claim this identity these narratives seem only likely to increase.

*When Half is Whole: Multiethnic Asian American Identities* serves as a particularly useful text by which to elaborate my ideas about racial affect and the recursivity of mixed race identification because of its inclusion of multiple identity narratives and its position within the field of Critical Mixed Race Studies. *When Half is Whole* was published after the turn of the millennium in 2012 by Stanford University Press, a distinguished academic publisher focused on generating scholarly debate and promoting global and cross-cultural discussion. Murphy-Shigematsu, a senior scholar, is considered by many within Critical Mixed Race Studies to be a pioneer in the field. He is a groundbreaking researcher in narrative psychology and Millennial Mixed Race Identity, author of essays and books in both Japanese and English, and a professor and co-founder of Lifeworks at Stanford University. As a distinguished writer in the field of Mixed Race Studies, although Murphy-Shigematsu does not assert Hapa identity in *When Half is Whole*, his book has received significant praise within the community of scholars working on millennial mixed race identity and has been lauded as a work that affirms Hapa identity. Kip Fulbeck has said the book “explores our exceptionally growing Hapa demographic with personal insight and fearless self-examination.”<sup>329</sup> Paul Spickard notes the book is a “near-perfect bridge of genres, scholarly in its insights and the knowledge base from which it proceeds, but rich in stories and the voices of mixed-race, complicated Asian individuals.”<sup>330</sup> Despite its focus on transnational millennial mixed race identities and its affirmation of Hapa identity, the book becomes a unique example of life writing focused on individuals who identify as mixed race

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<sup>329</sup> See review from Fulbeck at amazon.com accessed 21 Mar. 2017. Web. This review can also be found on the “Advance Praise for *When Half Is Whole*” page of the paperback edition (2012).

<sup>330</sup> See review on book cover from Paul Spickard.

with partial Asian/American ancestry precisely because it does not follow a heteronormative sequencing of time. While many of the conventional narratives privilege a linear trajectory that begins in childhood and follows to adulthood and the recognition (or affirmation) of a Millennial Mixed Race Identity; Murphy-Shigematsu weaves together the identity stories of many individuals with his own narrative moving back and forth in narrative time. The nontraditional structuring of the narrative highlights some of the key elements to reconceptualizing millennial mixed race identity: it allows for an understanding of identity as recursive; it shows how identity is shaped by our contact with others; and, it highlights how racial affect circulates through society and attaches to raced bodies in moments of racial encounter.

Moments of racial encounter often become significant moments in the development of a Millennial Mixed Race Identity because of the pervasiveness of these encounters in the everyday lives of people who identify as racially mixed. In the previous chapter, we concentrated on the negative affects that developed out of these experiences with race. Both Lennon and Fulbeck articulated the affective impact on their sense of identity that arose from their personal experiences of race in the past.<sup>331</sup> In this sense, it becomes easy to dismiss these accounts to the realm of private feelings. However, Ahmed's approach to the encounter and her approach to phenomenology, which we discussed above,<sup>332</sup> are acutely enlightening for shifting the focus of the racial encounter from a moment of private feeling to a moment in which racial affect continually attaches to bodies in our society. Ahmed's approach also allows the encounter to reveal the ways in which multiple histories (not just personal histories) give the background of, or stand behind, what we face in the encounter.

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<sup>331</sup> See chapter 2 in this dissertation.

<sup>332</sup> See Ahmed (2000)

Like many other millennial mixed race identity narratives, Murphy-Shigematsu focuses on past moments of racial encounter in his writing. In one example, he recounts a time he spoke in front of a colleague's class and was confronted by an Asian student for not looking Asian. He writes:

Many years later, I wonder why I became so frazzled by the simple comment. I guess the trauma runs deep because looking Asian was a source of childhood pain. White kids picked me out and peppered me with racial taunts, so to be told by Asians that I don't look Asian is experienced as rejection—once again.<sup>333</sup>

Here, Murphy-Shigematsu depicts the layered complexity of identity and racial encounter. In her approach, Ahmed highlights the notion that there are various levels involved in every encounter we experience in our daily lives. First, there is a simplistic “face-to-face” level of the encounter exemplified here by Murphy-Shigematsu's “eye-to-eye” contact with his student. On the surface, this “face-to-face” encounter shows how the “visual economy of recognition” works in our society in relation to race; Murphy-Shigematsu is seen and called out by his student as a racial “stranger” because he doesn't “look” Asian.<sup>334</sup> As mentioned above, in the previous chapter, we discussed moments such as these as moments of *failed* recognition—where the racially ambiguous body *fails* to be recognized. We examined how these moments of failed recognition function as affective force that accumulates over time and causes lasting effects on perceptions of self and self-worth for people who identify as Hapa.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> Murphy-Shigematsu 50.

<sup>334</sup> Ahmed argues that in order to be thought of as a stranger, one must be recognized as such. This is not merely a failure of recognition; it is recognition of strangeness—of not belonging, of otherness (21).

<sup>335</sup> Specifically we discussed how Fulbeck and Lennon call attention to their memories of failed recognition in relation to their racial identity and how these moments became formative for their understandings of self. See Chapter 2 page 9.

Ahmed's approach builds on these ideas by suggesting that this encounter is not merely a moment of failed recognition (of not being recognized as Asian); rather, the very fact that Murphy-Shigematsu is considered a "racial stranger" requires a form of recognition—the recognition of his strangeness (of not belonging, of otherness). Positioning these moments as the recognition of strangeness (rather than the failed recognition of mixedness), clarifies the ways in which affect attaches to specific bodies and (re)produces the "bounded spaces"<sup>336</sup> of racial categories over and over in our daily encounters. This (re)production of racial categories occurs as Murphy-Shigematsu is interpellated as "strange" and through the recognition of this strangeness portrayed as a body that must be (verbally) "expelled from the purified space of the [Asian] community."<sup>337</sup> On another level, this moment of being called out as a racial stranger can also be understood as a moment where the underlying racial affect of a feeling of "strangeness" towards racial mixing (read through the racial ambiguity of his body) takes form as it is called out and attached to his body. In her discussion of stranger danger, Ahmed argues that the stranger takes form precisely "by recuperating all that is unknowable into a figure that we imagine we might face here and now," thus, becoming a "figure of the unknowable."<sup>338</sup> If we use this to understand the racial stranger, then, we might better understand the way in which this racial stranger does not merely provoke a spontaneous racial anxiety at the moment of encounter; rather the stranger embodies the ever-present affect of anxiety surrounding racial mixing that

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<sup>336</sup> Ahmed (2000) 22.

<sup>337</sup> In her discussion of the discourse of stranger danger, Ahmed calls attention to the way in which the stranger becomes a figure that embodies "that which must be expelled from the purified space of the community." See Ahmed (2000) 22.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid.

constantly circulates within our society attaching to the body of the racial stranger over and over again in these type of everyday encounters.<sup>339</sup>

Understanding Murphy-Shigematsu's encounter via Ahmed's approach begins to shift the current perspective of these racial encounters for people who identify as mixed race. Interestingly, Murphy-Shigematsu reads this encounter within the dominant discourse of failed recognition as a "trauma" that reminds him of the "pain" he experienced in similar situations as a child. Rather than concentrating on the production of negative affects associated with failed recognition, Ahmed's approach disorients this understanding and instead produces something otherwise from the failure as she uncovers the ways in which affect highlights our constant contact with other bodies and histories.

Ahmed argues that encounters must not be thought of as merely a "discrete event" or "coupling" that occurs in a present moment between two bodies; rather, Ahmed stresses the ways in which every encounter is actually a "mediated" event where two bodies move through time and space in an approach to each other.<sup>340</sup> This view of the encounter allows for an understanding of the ways in which the present moment not only "reopens past encounters," but also "presupposes other faces, other encounters of facing, other bodies, other spaces and other times."<sup>341</sup> As we discussed above, one level of this mediated understanding involves how the preexisting racial affects circulating within society—the "strangeness" of racial mixing—attach to the body of Murphy-Shigematsu in the moment of encounter. However, this attachment of affect is not extemporaneous; each of the bodies involved in the face-to-face encounter bring to

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<sup>339</sup> Ahmed also mentions "the unfinished social anxiety about interracial mixing" in *Queer Phenomenology* (2006) 144.

<sup>340</sup> See Ahmed (2000) 7.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

the encounter their own micro and macro histories of race: on the micro-level, the Asian student involved in the encounter is presupposing other Asian and white faces/bodies in his own past encounters as he “recognizes” Murphy-Shigematsu as a racial stranger; on a more macro-level, the student is also synthesizing the affect of strangeness and the presumption of what Asian faces/bodies look like that are already circulating in society. The same mediation is simultaneously occurring for Murphy-Shigematsu as he relates how this “face-to-face” encounter with the student “presupposes other faces (Asian faces, white faces) other encounters of facing (the racial taunts), other bodies (the white kids, Asian bodies), other spaces, other times (his childhood).”<sup>342</sup> Although Murphy-Shigematsu may seem to replicate the dominant discourse of millennial mixed race identity narratives by viewing this encounter as failed recognition and trauma, Murphy-Shigematsu’s actual narration from the present of this past encounter and its similarity to events even further in his past, actually highlights how his sense of self is formed through his continual contact (and encounters) with other bodies and histories through time and space. While this understanding of the process of identity development is not necessarily anticolonial or antiracist; we can argue that it does disrupt the dominant heteronormative sequencing of time that Millennial Mixed Race Identities have perpetually supported by emphasizing the recursivity of encounters.

Along with encounters of failed recognition (which we can now understand as a recognition of strangeness), identity narratives by individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry also perpetually include encounters with the multiracializing gaze. The multiracializing gaze is a term used by Jillian Paragg in her work on the development of mixed race life narratives in the Canadian context of multiculturalism. Her concept of the

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<sup>342</sup> See Ahmed (2000) 7.



multiracializing gaze “combines Haritaworn’s (2012) work on multiracialization—the process by which race gets produced and reproduced on and through mixed race bodies—with well-established scholarship on the gaze.”<sup>343</sup>

In the previous chapter, we discussed some of the ways in which race gets reproduced on specific bodies: we articulated how the body was used in a project of *hapagenization* to create an imagined community in Kip Fulbeck’s *Part Asian 100% Hapa*,<sup>344</sup> the role of the body in the racialization of the family in American society;<sup>345</sup> how the body is used in the maintenance of white privilege.<sup>346</sup> Paragg’s notion of the multiracializing gaze and its influence in the development of the ready identities of her participants is similar to our discussion in the previous chapter of how racial essentialism is reinscribed on the racially ambiguous body through Kip Fulbeck’s invitation of racial voyeurism in his photos, which are used to establish and legitimate Hapa as a racial signifier.<sup>347</sup> In the previous chapter, we also discussed how the body is used to reinscribe racial essentialism back onto bodies perceived of as racially ambiguous.<sup>348</sup>

This is a key point that I want to highlight. Following Haritaworn, Paragg recognizes the way in which race is produced and reproduced “on and through mixed race bodies.”<sup>349</sup> The semantics here are less than precise. While Paragg does acknowledge the way in which the gaze

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<sup>343</sup> See Paragg (2).

<sup>344</sup> See pages 25-26 this dissertation.

<sup>345</sup> See page 19 this dissertation.

<sup>346</sup> See pages 36-37 this dissertation.

<sup>347</sup> See Chapter 2 in this dissertation page 37.

<sup>348</sup> While scholars like Fulbeck argue that the racially ambiguous body deconstructs racial essentialism by showing the futility of assigning phenotypic features to specific racial categories, Fulbeck’s project (the photos themselves) reinscribe racial essentialism by encouraging multiracial legibility of racially ambiguous bodies. See pages 38-39 in this dissertation.

<sup>349</sup> Paragg 2.

acts as a disciplinary method for fixing race and producing bodies as multiracial,<sup>350</sup> her wording can also lead to confusion with an essentialist view where bodies are already raced or mixed raced.<sup>351</sup> Despite this slippage, Paragg's work calls attention to the multiracializing gaze as a significant factor in the formation of the "ready identity narratives" of her participants.

Following Ahmed, Paragg's perspective is especially interesting because she concentrates on the deployment of these "ready identities" in moments of encounter (the face-to-face meetings) with the gaze; and, how these "ready identities" are mediated through a lifetime of lived experiences with, as well as future anticipations of, that gaze.<sup>352</sup> While Paragg and other writers, including Fulbeck,<sup>353</sup> highlight the centrality of encounters with the multiracializing gaze for racially ambiguous bodies and its effects on identity formation in the narratives of millennial mixed race identity; these scholars and writers fail to examine the ways in which these moments of encounter with the multiracializing gaze can actually be read as moments where the racial affects already circulating within society attach to specific bodies and inform our sense of self and other in that specific encounter; and, how these moments can help us build affective connections between differently raced bodies.<sup>354</sup>

For individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry, the body and its experiences with the multiracializing gaze become significant and often repeated

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<sup>350</sup> Ibid.

<sup>351</sup> Unlike Paragg, I want to remain as precise as possible that bodies are not already raced as mixed—this merely reproduces notions of racial essentialism onto those bodies—rather, bodies are perceived of or self-identified as mixed race.

<sup>352</sup> See Jillian Paragg's Dissertation Chapter entitled "The Lived Experience of the Multiracializing Gaze."

<sup>353</sup> See previous chapter of this dissertation.

<sup>354</sup> In *Half and Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural* (1998), Claudine Chaiwei O'Hearn recalls, "I don't look especially Chinese—my eyes are wide and lidded, and my hair has a Caucasian texture and color. When my mother and I walked together, people would stare, often rudely" (viii).

moments of racial encounter that are expressed through identity narratives. Writers such as Fulbeck, Claudine Chaiwei O'Hearn, Jeff Chiba Sterns, and others include accounts of encounters with the multiracializing gaze in their work.<sup>355</sup> Following this trend, Murphy-Shigematsu also includes these encounters in *When Half is Whole*. He writes, "I learned early in life that others were eager to figure me out, categorize me, label me, even name me. They saw what they wanted to see, what differentiated me, what bothered them about the way I looked."<sup>356</sup> Unlike other narratives about millennial mixed race identity, Murphy-Shigematsu does not spend an extended amount of time detailing how his body is dissected and racialized.<sup>357</sup> He briefly mentions his own body while relating to another woman's experience of her own face that "stigmatized her as racially different"; he says, "It seems clear to others, and sometimes to me, that my long sharp nose is Irish, my oval face Japanese, my fair skin Irish, my dark hair Japanese, my hazel eyes a mix of Irish blue and Japanese black."<sup>358</sup> In his narrative, Murphy-Shigematsu performs a multiracializing gaze upon his own body as he dissects how each body part fits into a racial category.<sup>359</sup> According to Paragg the gaze's "readings of bodies works to call those bodies into being, i.e., to call respondents into being mixed race."<sup>360</sup> While Paragg goes on to discuss how the iterative nature of these lived everyday encounters with the gaze form the basis for her respondents' "ready identity narratives," Paragg still understands the moments

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<sup>355</sup> See Fulbeck's Introduction in *Part Asian 100% Hapa*; Claudine Chaiwei O'Hearn's "Introduction" to *Half and Half: Writers in Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural*; see Jeff Chiba Stern's *One Big Hapa Family*.

<sup>356</sup> Murphy-Shigematsu 43.

<sup>357</sup> See Claudine Chaiwei O'Hearn's "Introduction" to *Half and Half: Writers in Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural* for one example of this type of racialized bodily dissection.

<sup>358</sup> Murphy-Shigematsu 43.

<sup>359</sup> Although Murphy-Shigematsu identifies his physical features in ethnic terms, I argue that his use of ethnicity here is actually racialized. I argue that his use of *Irish* is a stand-in for *white* and *Japanese* a stand-in for *Asian*, perhaps in an attempt to not conflate race and phenotype.

<sup>360</sup> Paragg follows Althusser's theories of interpellation here. See Paragg 13.

of interpellation as moments that serve to affix a racial category (albeit a newly augmented racial category—mixed race) to the body. The gaze acts as a hailing of the body and calls it into being mixed race. While this calls attention to the way in which mixed race is produced on bodies, understanding Murphy-Shigematsu's internalization of the multiracializing gaze through this perspective simply reifies the predominance of identity categories and demonstrates an internalization of the power of race to control, separate, differentiate, and divide our understandings of bodies within our racialized world.

Building on Paragg's work, we can read the internalization of the multiracializing gaze not just as a moment of interpellation (a moment in which he is hailed as a multiracial subject), but also as a linguistic iteration of affective history that is carried within/on bodies in our society. While interpellation does account for the ways in which ideologies attach to specific bodies through the act of hailing a subject, it does not necessarily account for the more phenomenological aspects of affects—not only the feelings and emotions but the uncategorizable intensities that circulate amongst and between bodies; nor, does interpellation account for the ways in which focusing on these affects can induce kinship between differently raced bodies.

Shifting our understanding of encounters with the multiracializing gaze to include an understanding of affective history permits a perspectival turn of these accounts of the gaze in both the private and public sphere. As we discussed in the previous chapter, these encounters with the multiracializing gaze have traditionally been read within the discourse of failed recognition as past traumas in the personal history of the individual who identifies as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry. As an example of how to shift the focus of failure in the private sphere, in line with Paragg, we can instead read Murphy-Shigematsu's internalization of the multiracializing gaze within a more individualistic understanding of affect as a result of a

“cycle of anticipating, reading and reacting [sic] to the moments where race is in (re)production on [his] bod[y].”<sup>361</sup> In this understanding, Murphy-Shigematsu’s narrative of the gaze is a product of what Clare Hemmings refers to as an “affective cycle.”<sup>362</sup> According to Hemmings, an affective cycle can be understood as a pattern, not of repetition, but of a continuous, shifting chain of body-affect-emotion that effects how an individual exists and acts in the world.<sup>363</sup> For Murphy-Shigematsu, then, the narrative breakdown of his body through the multiracializing gaze is a linguistic iteration—a narrative construction—created in response to his individual past experiences with lived encounters of the gaze and his future anticipations of encounters with the gaze. Both these past memories and future anticipations become part of his affective cycle that are then carried within his own construction and understanding of his body and his narration of his body within a multiracial framework.

More significantly, shifting our understanding of the multiracializing gaze can also help to illuminate another dimension of how racial affect circulates in our society and attaches to bodies in moments of encounter with the gaze. While Paragg touches on the way in which race is attached to the body through the external gaze and claims that the difficulty in calling out experiences with the gaze as a racial experience is “central to the operation of race and power,”<sup>364</sup> she does not go into how the gaze reproduces power relations onto specific bodies or how the legislation of race on those bodies carry with it specific histories of race. Clare

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<sup>361</sup> Paragg 13.

<sup>362</sup> See Hemmings 564.

<sup>363</sup> Hemmings defines “affective cycles form *patterns* that are subject to reflective or political, rather than momentary or arbitrary judgment. Such affective cycles might be described not as a series of repeated moments— body-affect-emotion—a self-contained phrase repeated in time, but as an ongoing, incrementally altering chain—body-affect-emotion-affect-body—doubling back upon the body and influencing the individual’s capacity to act in the world” (564).

<sup>364</sup> Paragg 13.

Hemmings calls attention to racial affect when she discusses Franz Fanon and Audre Lorde's descriptions of the affective responses to their blackness. Hemmings concentrates on the accounts of affective response recalled by both authors and how the affective responses the authors witness act as, what Hemmings terms, *affective racialization*—Fanon and Lorde's bodies become known to them as raced as they are presented via an affective response by someone else.<sup>365</sup> She also brings up the way in which the fear of the boy in Fanon's story is "learned within a racist familial and social order" that then attaches to an "unknown black object."<sup>366</sup> Racial affect can be understood as precisely the way in which affect (the boy's fear) that has been learned in a "racist social order" becomes attached to a racialized body (the unknown black object). In a less obvious way, the same movement of racial affect and power is at work when individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry encounter the multiracializing gaze and internalize it. For example, although the affect is not as clearly laid out in Murphy-Shigematsu's internalization of the multiracial gaze as it is in Fanon's memory; these racial affects are constantly circulating within our society and attaching to bodies in these moments of encounter. In fact, Murphy-Shigematsu does clearly articulate a sense of others being "bothered" by his body. Although Murphy-Shigematsu doesn't give an exact reason for this revulsion at the sight of his body, in American society there is an affective history of revulsion constantly circulating—one that is disgusted with interracial sex, as well as with the Asian male body.

Paradoxically, this revulsion of interracial sex becomes attached in particular ways to bodies that are perceived as racially ambiguous in a different way than it gets attached to bodies

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<sup>365</sup> Hemmings 561-562.

<sup>366</sup> See Hemming's discussions of Fanon and Lorde (561-562).

perceived of as black (even though these bodies are often clearly a mix of black and white or black and some other race). This difference occurs, in part, because within the United States, there is the legacy of the one-drop-rule and its inclusive taxonomy of race whereby one-drop of black blood perpetuated the enslavement of the offspring of slaves and white landowners.<sup>367</sup> This racial logic requires the strict policing of the boundaries of racial categories and the patrolling of sexual reproduction because race is not a biological fact. Rather, race requires the constant construction and maintenance of strict boundaries between constructed racial categories. Due to this requirement, the regulation of sex and race come together in a fear and revulsion towards interracial sex on the part of the dominant (white) society precisely because it poses a threat to the illusion of these clearly defined boundaries between “races”<sup>368</sup> upon which the system of slavery was based. Within this logic, whiteness maintains its power through its supposed purity and normalization<sup>369</sup> and white women’s sexual and reproductive acts become central to the purity and fate of the white race.<sup>370</sup> Alternately, the bodies of black males and females become hypersexualized as a method of discipline and control that dehumanizes these bodies in the service of slavery.<sup>371</sup> As black bodies become dehumanized and white bodies

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<sup>367</sup> See Wolfe 387.

<sup>368</sup> See Abby Ferber “Defending the Creation of Whiteness: White Supremacy and the Threat of Interracial Sexuality” (46).

<sup>369</sup> Cornel West argues that with the advent of racial categories, whiteness has been the ideal by which other bodies are measured (55). See also Frankenberg (1999) and Ferber (2004).

<sup>370</sup> Ferber 53.

<sup>371</sup> Patricia Hill Collins in *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* argues that as part of the economy of chattel slavery, black bodies became property; this included an abject dehumanization whereby black bodies and all that were “contained in those bodies (labor, sexuality, and reproduction) were objectified and turned into commodities.”<sup>371</sup> In this system of bondage slavery, black males were used for “hard manual labor,” which “required objectifying their bodies as big, strong, and stupid.” Along with these characteristics, black males were also seen as inherently violent and sexual. On the other hand, white women came to represent the ideals in beauty, purity, and temperament that were contrasted with the

become exalted, interracial sexuality between these bodies becomes reviled (even as these bodies continue in reality to participate in interracial sexual relations) and black bodies become sexual menaces threatening to contaminate the supposed purity of the white race.

This revulsion toward interracial sexuality may be most often traced back to slavery and black/white sexual relations, but there is also a history of revulsion toward the Asian male body that circulates in American society and attaches to particular bodies in these moments of racial encounter. Whereas black male bodies were dehumanized through associations with hypermasculinity and unbridled, bestial sexuality, Asian male bodies were differentiated and controlled through an opposing logic of feminization. While there has been a longstanding discourse in European civilizations constructing a profound opposition between East and West,<sup>372</sup> Asian American scholars argue that the feminization of Asian males in the American consciousness traces back to the nineteenth century when Chinese laborers were brought to the United States first as gold miners and later to construct the Central Pacific Railroad.<sup>373</sup> Scholars such as Takaki, Chiung Hwang Chen, and Aoki have all argued that two factors contributed to this feminization of the Asian male body: the physical appearance of Asian men and the labor in which their bodies were engaged.<sup>374</sup> These scholars argue that Asian laborers were easily distinguishable from other European laborers of the time based on physical appearance, and that

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image of the “black female jezebel” propagated through the institutionalized rape of black women. Black female bodies were defined as “sites of wild, unrestrained sexuality that could be tamed but never completely subdued. Black female bodies were stripped of agency and used within a “system of profit” for labor, sexual exploitation, and sexual reproduction to increase the labor force (55-56).

<sup>372</sup> See Edward Said’s “Introduction” to *Orientalism* for a more detailed explanation of how Orientalism works as a master discourse that produces and manages the Oriental “other.”

<sup>373</sup> See Chiung Hwang Chen’s “The Feminization of Asian (American) Men in the U.S. Mass Media: An Analysis of the *Ballad of Little Jo*” and Takaki’s *Strangers From a Different Shore* for more on Chinese laborers.

<sup>374</sup> See Chen 58.



many of the identifiable characteristics (the long braided queue, smaller and thinner stature, slanted eyes, tunics) were characterized as feminine.<sup>375</sup> More significantly, economic depression and anti-Asian sentiments combined to create legislation that further branded Asian men as feminine. After Chinese workers were used as strikebreakers against European laborers demanding higher wages, the white labor unions pushed Congress to create “laws limiting aliens’ occupations;” this legislation barred Asian laborers from competing for jobs desired by Europeans and pushed them into economic areas (cooks, waiters, dishwashers, laundrymen) “devalued by Euro-American men.”<sup>376</sup> In conjunction, anti-immigration laws (in particular: the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, The Page Law of 1876, and the Cable Act of 1922) created large bachelor societies, which “helped to emasculate Chinese men by restricting their access to heterosexual norms and ideals such as nuclear family formations.”<sup>377</sup> These exclusionary laws, created an image of Asian men as docile, weak, and feminine in order to control and differentiate those bodies within the social and racial system of the United States. As a result, the Asian male body becomes imbued with affects of revulsion and disgust as it is produced in opposition to the normalized conceptions of masculinity attributed to Euro-American males.

This feminization of the Asian male body works in an articulated way as the hyper masculinity of black bodies to dehumanize Asian bodies in the service of white supremacy. As Asian males become debased and differentiated by and against white bodies, sexual intimacy between these bodies becomes reviled.<sup>378</sup> Again, since race is not a biological fact, the power of

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<sup>375</sup> See Chen 58 and Takaki 13.

<sup>376</sup> Chen 58.

<sup>377</sup> Chen also notes that in 1884 the Chinese Exclusion Act was specifically amended to include the wives of Chinese laborers (58-59). Also see Michael Park 10.

<sup>378</sup> Although different Asian male bodies (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Filipino, etc.) have experienced this debasement in various ways (some more extremely than others) that has shifted

whiteness depends upon its supposed purity and normalization. Whiteness becomes normalized precisely because the Asian male body becomes (is made to be) deviant through emasculation. As this emasculation is attached to Asian male bodies, white female bodies again represent the fate and purity of the white race through their reproductive acts; thus, sexual acts between these bodies become exceedingly policed. As Asian males were forced into bachelor societies, legislation was also enacted that codified sexual acts between Asian men and white women as deviant: the Cable Act of 1922 specifically stripped white women of their citizenship if they married an Asian man; and other laws specified that Asian men would be imprisoned and fined for sex with white women.<sup>379</sup> Even as Asian men were debilitated through images of emasculation, the codification of the illicitness of interracial sexuality between Asian men and white women worked to produce Asian male bodies as a sexual threat precisely because it endangered the purity and power of whiteness. In fact, this feminization and threat combine to form the basis of the revulsion and disgust toward interracial sexuality that continues to circulate and attach to Asian male bodies in our society today.

While the revulsion of interracial sex attaches to bodies perceived of as black or Asian as sexual threat, it attaches to bodies perceived of as racially ambiguous in a related but different way in a multicultural society. As mentioned above, “maintaining the borders between the races is essential for their construction.”<sup>380</sup> Within a racial system that depends upon the differentiation of racial groups to maintain the strict racial hierarchy where whiteness is positioned at the top, the ambiguous body is a representation of the lie of racial purity and racial

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in different historical contexts, most Asian American scholars recognize that each ethnic group has experienced this dehumanization at some point in American history.

<sup>379</sup> See Chen 59 and Takaki (1989) 15.

<sup>380</sup> Ferber 49.

hierarchy; specifically, the mixed race body becomes the “living embodiment of the threat” against the borders of white identity and its power.<sup>381</sup> In this sense, the revulsion of interracial sexuality attaches to the racially ambiguous body not just as a threat to racial purity but also as evidence of the so-called deviant sexual act; but it must be remembered that this “deviance” is ultimately rooted in a revulsion against otherness. As Rainer Spencer and Abby Ferber note, images of mixed bodies as “mongrels” who were “feared and despised” were popularized in the nineteenth century and resulted from white males “self-imposed need to mark the resulting children” of interracial sexual acts as “naturally damaged and less whole.”<sup>382</sup> Spencer suggests that this demonization was “required” either to “alleviate the white man’s guilt over his enduring participation in miscegenation” or due to “the perceived threat to his psychic manhood in the case of black male/white female unions.”<sup>383</sup> In a worldview where “biological race is real” and there is a strict differentiation between races, then it follows that “there must be something distasteful and unnatural about the sexual union of the two” and “one would expect that there be something wrong with the offspring.”<sup>384</sup> While biological race has been deconstructed to be sure, the beliefs surrounding interracial sex and its offspring have endured (albeit in a far more muted way). It is precisely as a product of sexual and racial transgression that the racially ambiguous body becomes menacing to the racial system because its approximation towards whiteness is a transgression against whiteness and its power. In today’s society, this threat to racial purity is not as definitive as it was during Jim Crow, slavery, or Chinese Exclusion. In fact, due to the shifting demographics in the United States, this threat to racial purity is

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<sup>381</sup> Ferber 54.

<sup>382</sup> See Ferber, *White Man Falling*, 111 and Spencer, *Reproducing Race*, 24.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid.

<sup>384</sup> Spencer 25.

experienced differently in various locations.<sup>385</sup> In fact, it is better understood today as a residual affect that circulates within society and then manifests in a much more coded manner through these veiled encounters with the multiracializing gaze.

Going back to Ahmed, along with carrying the racial affect of revulsion towards interracial sex and disgust for Asian male bodies, we can also understand encounters with the multiracializing gaze as moments in which the history of scientific racism stands in the background and orients the direction of this gaze. Looking at the explication of Murphy-Shigematsu's body parts as an example, we can see that identifying the ways in which specific corporeal elements (his nose, his eyes, his face, his hair) belong to one or another racial category carries with it a history of scientific racism dating back to the Classical Age and the facial angle. Cornel West argues that the classical revival infused Greek ocular metaphors and classical ideals of beauty, proportion, and moderation into the beginnings of modern discourse" and produced a "normative gaze"—"an ideal from which to order and compare observations."<sup>386</sup> For West, this "normative gaze" is imbued with notions of white supremacy since racism and the emergence of a classificatory system in natural history are inseparable.<sup>387</sup> West notes that white supremacy as an object of modern discourse primarily emerged through phrenology and Pieter Camper's notions of the facial angle.<sup>388</sup> In this pseudoscience of measuring skulls and body parts, Camper's ideal "facial angle" was "achieved only by the ancient Greeks."<sup>389</sup> Within Camper's work, he argued that Europeans measured the closest to his ideal "facial angle" while black

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<sup>385</sup> This residual affective anxiety about interracial sex will be experienced differently depending on whether one's experience is in California, the Midwest, or Hawai'i.

<sup>386</sup> West 53-54.

<sup>387</sup> West 55.

<sup>388</sup> West 57.

<sup>389</sup> West 58.

people measured closer to animals than human beings.<sup>390</sup> These new notions of ideal beauty were not merely physical, Camper and other thinkers began linking “visible characteristics of human bodies, especially those of the face, to the character and capacities of human beings.”<sup>391</sup> With this genealogy of racism, the internalization of the multiracializing gaze in Murphy-Shigematsu’s narrative is not merely explicative; rather, it carries with it a history of racism and antiblackness dating back to antiquity.

While Murphy-Shigematsu may not give a reason why people are “bothered” by his racially ambiguous, Asian male body, we now understand that there are particular racial affects of interracial sexual revulsion and disgust with Asian male bodies that combine with a history of scientific racism and circulate within our society and then attach to variously raced bodies in moments of racial encounter. Rather than reading this multiracializing gaze in Murphy-Shigematsu’s work as just another example of how bodies are interpellated and called into being mixed race (fixing that body with a particular identity), understanding the ways in which these racial affects and histories of racism attach to the body of Murphy-Shigematsu during his encounters with the multiracializing gaze (and his own internalization of that gaze) situate this ambiguous body within a longstanding discourse of race and racism. While this is true of our understandings of interpellation to be sure, through its own comprehension of the way in which ideologies work relying on Ahmed’s approach highlights movement and space.

In this perspective, these histories of race do not just make up the background of encounters with the gaze, but this perspective shows how this background *moves* to be both what is behind the encounter, as well as what surrounds and attaches to bodies in the present moment

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<sup>390</sup> Ibid.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

of encounter with the gaze. Calling attention to how these racial affects exist within the space of racial encounter specifically through the multiracializing gaze not only accounts for the uncategorizable intensities that circulate amongst and between bodies; but also offers an opportunity for individuals who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry to disorient themselves from the traditional trajectory of movement away from racialized bodies and towards whiteness. While this may not automatically result in antiracism, since these ambiguous bodies seem to consistently and repeatedly encounter the multiracializing gaze, locating this gaze as a point of convergence for these racial affects and histories of race presents an opportunity to disrupt the power of whiteness if the people who experience this multiracializing gaze can begin to recognize how these moments of racial encounter affectively tie them to the bodies of racialized others rather than white bodies in our society.

So far in this chapter, I have attempted to show how we can shift the focus of racial encounters from moments of failed recognition (that have ultimately led to identifications with Millennial Mixed Race Identities) to moments where the failures can be used to disrupt heteronormative time and the power of whiteness. First, focusing on the layered complexities of encounters between bodies in our society opens up our comprehension of the ways in which moments of failed recognition can actually be understood as moments of recognition—the recognition of strangeness. From this perspective, we were able to uncover the way in which the “recognition of strangeness” could be read as an affect of strangeness surrounding the notion of racial mixing that attached to the racially ambiguous body during this moment of racial encounter. Not only are we able to understand the affect of strangeness circulating in our society in relation to racial mixing, we are also able to parse out the layered complexity of this racial encounter to reveal how both personal and public histories of race and affect come together in

the moment of encounter. This overlaid paradigm of the encounter helps to disrupt the conflation of multiracial time with heteronormative time via affect. Further developing this idea in the latter portion of this chapter, I also try to highlight how longstanding histories and discourses of race and affect come together and circulate in our society attaching to different bodies in moments of racial encounter. Understanding this movement permits individuals who may believe themselves to be detached from histories of colonialism or antiblackness to see the affective connection to these legacies via this point of encounter (specifically the multiracializing gaze). By bringing these histories back into view, I hope to show how these moments of encounter with the multiracializing gaze can be used as moments when the power of whiteness (or at least a desire for honorary whiteness) can be unsettled.

In conclusion, I would like to offer one more disorientation of the discourse of failed recognition that has previously dominated Millennial Mixed Race Identity discourse. Along with encounters of failed recognition and encounters with the multiracializing gaze, identity narratives by people who identify as mixed race and Asian/American also often include overtly racist encounters. Writers such as Fulbeck,<sup>392</sup> Lennon,<sup>393</sup> and many amateur bloggers<sup>394</sup> include memories of these past experiences in their identity narratives. As we discussed in the previous chapter, these past experiences are often highlighted in the identity narratives as formative moments of racial difference that accumulate negative affects over time and form the affective residue of misrecognition that fuels an eventual identification with millennial mixed race identities such as Hapa. Rather than reading these memories as moments of failed recognition that

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<sup>392</sup> See Chapter 2 page 10 this dissertation. See Fulbeck 11.

<sup>393</sup> See Fulbeck 20.

<sup>394</sup> One woman, Erika, says: “my former shame can be attributed to my upbringing in a pretty, but prejudiced place.” Another woman, Amy, recalls, “I was rarely bullied at school, though once a kid asked me, ‘why my nose was different?’” See *hapavoice.com* 10 Nov. 2017.

follow the linear sequencing to the end-goal of affective resolution via millennial mixed race identities, such as Hapa; this chapter will focus on how these moments of failure can be disoriented and interpreted otherwise as affective connecting points.

In accordance with other millennial mixed race identity narratives, Murphy-Shigematsu recalls a moment of racist encounter from his childhood. Murphy-Shigematsu remembers how his “friends” gave him the nickname “Ping” after watching *Blue Hawaii*, in which Elvis has a Chinese servant named “Ping Pong.”<sup>395</sup> He notes that there was a kid who would draw a caricature of “Ping” and give him the drawing as a present. He says, “I didn’t know any better, that was really the scary part.”<sup>396</sup> While this could easily slip into a typical story of racist encounter in which Murphy-Shigematsu was made to feel different and isolated in his “childhood among whites,”<sup>397</sup> we can shift our perspective to focus this encounter on the way in which racial affect attaches onto the body of Murphy-Shigematsu and draws a connection between two racialized bodies. The story of the white child drawing the images of Ping and then gifting these racist caricatures to Murphy-Shigematsu can be read as a moment where Murphy-Shigematsu’s body is literally composed (on the page) through the racial affects of Orientalism circulating within our society. Edward Said defined Orientalism as a longstanding discourse within European civilizations that has constructed a profound opposition between East and West.<sup>398</sup> Through the production of “otherness,” the West is able to manage and control in a coherent and unified way its own affects of fear and desire in relation to what it sees as

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<sup>395</sup> Murphy-Shigematsu 27.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid.

<sup>398</sup> See Edward Said’s “Introduction” to *Orientalism* for a more detailed explanation of how Orientalism works as a master discourse that produces and manages the Oriental “other.”



“manifestly different.”<sup>399</sup> The racial affects of fear and desire of the unknown is continually “learned within [the] racist familial and social order” of the United States;<sup>400</sup> the white child demonstrates a fear of Murphy-Shigematsu by marking his body as racially different (he is composed as racially other) but also a desire to incorporate that difference through the known image of Ping Pong that is then gifted to the racial other himself. In this sense, we can read this moment of racist encounter not just as a moment of difference and isolation, but as an example of the way in which the affects of fear and desire circulating in our society in relation to the unknown Asian body attach to the body of Murphy-Shigematsu specifically.

Rather than focus on this incident as an encounter of racial difference, as most millennial mixed race identity narratives tend to do, this moment of racial encounter actually becomes a moment of affective connection that binds Murphy-Shigematsu to another racialized body. Using an unconventional technique for a millennial mixed race identity narrative, Murphy-Shigematsu embeds the narrative of his friend Peter Nien-chu Kiang within his own story of this racist encounter with the white child. He cites Peter’s own story of being the “only Chinese family on our block.”<sup>401</sup> Peter recalls a moment of racist encounter where the kids at school would draw and show him stereotypical pictures of a caricature “Fuji,” which included “buckteeth and glasses.”<sup>402</sup> Peter notes this was “an endearing little nickname” that the kids had given him and which he “adopted” because it signaled a “kind of acceptance.”<sup>403</sup> As discussed above with Murphy-Shigematsu, we can see that the composition of this caricature, Fuji, is a physical encapsulation of the racial affects of desire and fear towards unknown Asian bodies

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<sup>399</sup> Said 12.

<sup>400</sup> Hemmings 562.

<sup>401</sup> Murphy-Shigematsu 26.

<sup>402</sup> Murphy-Shigematsu 26-27.

<sup>403</sup> Murphy-Shigematsu 26-27.

circulating in society and then attaching to and producing the body of Peter in this moment. Rather than focusing on the racist encounter of one individual's past (either Peter or Murphy-Shigematsu) as a moment in which that individual comes to understand himself as racially different, isolated, or alone; Murphy-Shigematsu uses the narrative to draw together two remote bodies in time and space. These racist encounters took place in two different pasts, in two different locations, to two differently racially identifying bodies. However, the narrative connects these encounters through its own retelling of almost identical racist encounters experienced in the past, as well as the evidence of the continued omnipresence of these encounters as both men remember these encounters while speaking of themselves in the present time. In this sense, Murphy-Shigematsu is able to employ narrative technique to highlight this racist encounter as an affective connection between two distinct racialized bodies—his and Peter's.

Returning again to Ahmed's methodology, we can explore how bringing together two differently racialized bodies can produce connection in a moment of failure. Ahmed argues that proximity is a crucial element to understanding our orientations.<sup>404</sup> Again, while I don't believe this connection to automatically equate to antiracism; reconsidering the ways in which confrontations with racist encounter can be read as moments of affective connection to other racialized bodies offers a different orientation than the traditional understanding of racial difference that leaves the body isolated and alone (and perhaps, then, in search of affective resolution via an end-goal of rearticulated racial identity). With Ahmed's paradigm, we can understand that this moment of racist encounter is a moment that brings the two separate racialized bodies (of Peter and Steven) into proximity with each other. Here, Ahmed notes that

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<sup>404</sup> Ahmed (2006) 126.

bodies that are “near “ are more likely to be incorporated into the body image.<sup>405</sup> Ahmed makes a crucial point here as she uses this argument to understand the reproduction and power of whiteness: she warns that proximity is sometimes used to “extend the reach of the white body” by confirming its whiteness via its being “not other” as it extends towards the other.<sup>406</sup>

While I would not go so far as to offer this moment of racist encounter as proof of bodily incorporation (where Steven and Peter become the same or even take on a part of the other), I do believe that it offers a chance to change the possibilities of alignment with other racialized bodies via proximity. If a moment of racist encounter can be a moment that draws two racialized bodies into proximate space (a space segregated from whiteness) then we can see that although the bodies may not be exactly the same (racialized in the same way or dealing with same material conditions) that there is at least an affective tie that places them both out of (or away from) white space.

As we have seen through the proliferation of blogs, e-articles, and books, these negative affects of isolation and misrecognition remain relevant for people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry well into the new millennium. In fact, as we saw in the first two chapters of this dissertation, while the census changes indicate government sponsored recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity, people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry continue to seek out ready identities such as Hapa in an attempt to resolve feelings of failed recognition. With a continued investment in these Millennial Mixed Race Identities as an alternative form of intimate recognition, it seems unlikely that we can rid ourselves of millennial mixed race discourse or the desire for these identifications. In fact, it

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<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Ahmed specifically uses bell hooks argument here about “eating the other” and warns that “To become black through proximity is not to be black” (2006, 128).

appears that we can only attempt to reformulate our understandings of millennial mixed race identifications in order to avoid perpetuating notions of heteronormativity, colonialism, white supremacy, and the power of race that these identities have previously supported. As I have argued, affect has been the key to illuminating the previously underscored affective motivations of the Mixed Race Identity Movement and their dependence on state-sponsored recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity. Affect has also revealed the continued dominance of the discourse of recognition in the new millennium via more intimate forms of recognition garnered by specific Millennial Mixed Race Identities and the communities that coalesce around those identities. As we have seen affect has played a significant role in the significance of, desire for, and investment in Millennial Mixed Race Identity. Therefore, it would follow that affect may also hold the key to reconceptualizing millennial mixed race identification. Thus, in this chapter, I have used affect to shift the perspective from the end-goal of recognition for Millennial Mixed Race Identities to how the failures of recognition can be opened up to reveal the ways in which bodies connect in moments of racial encounter with other bodies, spaces, times, and histories. By focusing on three different types of encounter that have become central to the development of ready identities, such as Hapa, I have shown the ways in which racial affect circulates in our society and attaches to specific bodies in these moments of racial encounter. While I have attempted to disrupt traditional pathways to identification with Millennial Mixed Race Identities (such as Hapa) by underscoring the recursivity and repetition of these racial encounters, how these moments bring together bodies and histories, and how these moments are informed by time and space, unfortunately, I do not believe that my illuminations can ever really steer us clear of the trappings of race, heteronormativity, colonialism, or antiblackness that have shadowed Millennial Mixed Race Identity.

## **Affective Reorientations: Rethinking Millennial Mixed Race Identities in the Post-Millennium**

In the end of the last chapter, I suggested that although I have attempted to resurrect Millennial Mixed Race Identity from its shadows of colonialism, heteronormativity, white supremacy, and its reinforcement of the power of race to control and demarcate bodies in our society, the more I have examined Millennial Mixed Race Identity through the perspective of affect, the more I am convinced that this is just not possible. I believe what has been possible from this endeavor is to better understand the investments in these Millennial Mixed Race Identities and how exactly they become so imbued with power for the individuals who desire them. In a sense this is a perspectival turn, or maybe, just a turn back as Sara Ahmed would see it. I have shifted the focus back onto the affective aspects that have shaped the drive towards recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identities. In using this turn back toward the personal, I believe I have shown in some ways how the “racial dwelling” of Millennial Mixed Race Identities “is shaped by the condition’s of one’s arrival”<sup>407</sup> at that identity. In other words, the road to recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identities is much more significant than the identity itself.

In the first chapter, I focused on the affective conditions of the Mixed Race Identity Movement’s “arrival” at state-sponsored recognition. In other words, I highlighted the way in which affective motivations drove the early members of the Mixed Race Identity Movement to invest in the government recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity. The perspective of affect revealed how the personal realm of feelings became a significant factor in driving the political action of the Mixed Race Identity Movement and reveals the power of race to

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<sup>407</sup> Ahmed (2006) 143.

undermine even our most intimate affective relationships. In understanding the ways in which affect influenced the Mixed Race Identity Movement's fight for state-sponsored recognition, the problems associated with soliciting the state to solve affective matters also becomes illuminated: how this desire for state-sponsored recognition works to support the power of government to regulate and control which bodies are legible within its borders; how this state-sponsored recognition reinforces the power of race and racial classification more generally; and, how the Mixed Race Identity Movement supports heteronormative time via its politics of recognition.

In the second chapter, I focused on the affective conditions of individuals who identified as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry and their "arrival" at more particularized Millennial Mixed Race Identities, specifically Hapa. In the new millennium, it becomes clear that state-sponsored recognition via the census tabulation has in some significant ways failed to achieve the affective resolution that those within the Mixed Race Identity Movement hoped for. In this chapter we looked at the way in which negative affects persisted in relation to people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry even after the implementation of state-sponsored recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identity. In order to solve these affective conditions, many individuals began to look for more intimate forms of recognition than that which was offered by the state. Specifically, many people began to look at smaller communities formed around Millennial Mixed Race Identities as holding affective value because they offered the affective resolution that these individuals' desired. Focusing on Hapa Identity and the Hapa community formed through Kip Fulbeck's project *Part Asian 100% Hapa*, this chapter also revealed how this millennial mixed race identity replicates racial stratification and maintains the power of race to demarcate and distinguish bodies in our society; upholds white supremacy and racial essentialism; supports structures of colonialism via the erasure of the specific ways in

which mixed race has been used against Native people in the dispossession of their lands and African Americans in the propagation of slavery; reifies colonialism through the conflation of Asians, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Native Hawaiians.

In the final chapter, I attempted to pose a necessary reconceptualization of Millennial Mixed Race Identities for people who identify as mixed race with partial Asian/American ancestry (although this is also necessary for other groups who identify as mixed race) that allows us to see more clearly the process of identification. This attention not only permits us to perceive more clearly that which was discussed in the previous chapters about the way in which affect accumulates and leads to a (re)investment in the recognition of Millennial Mixed Race Identities; but, more importantly, it acknowledges the significance of racial affects that constantly circulate in our society and attach to bodies in moments of racial encounter. We can understand that these racial encounters too can cause an affective accumulation that leads right back to the desire for recognition of an alternative racial identity. However, highlighting the “condition’s of one’s arrival” to Millennial Mixed Race Identities also opens up the possibility of disrupting the dominant discourse of recognition by taking the moments of failure to disorient the linearity of this path and show how bodies connect in these moments of racial encounter with other bodies, histories, times, and spaces. While bringing together bodies and histories is not necessarily correlative of antiracist or anticolonial views, it does encourage a different understanding of Millennial Mixed Race identification and experiences of race in a world where racial identity still matters.

In her concluding chapters of *Queer Phenomenology*, Sara Ahmed advocates that a mixed orientation is an orientation that queers our understandings precisely because it opens an alternative angle from which to see the world and its making. For Ahmed, the mixed race body

is central in understanding this mixed orientation, although she specifies being mixed does not necessarily make her queer. Specifically, Ahmed highlights the way in which a mixed orientation disrupts the way in which whiteness itself gets reproduced since it is both proximate to her body and something that she cannot inhabit; this space of failed habitation causes discomfort that can also produce a movement in the way we shape the world. While I do not share Ahmed's celebratory stance on millennial mixed race, I do think her suppositions offer some insight for my own conclusions. First, we might understand the way in which my project has been a practice in this mixed orientating. In many ways, this dissertation has been an attempt to reformulate our understandings of millennial mixed race identity precisely from its failures. In the end, I do not believe that this reorientation has made Millennial Mixed Race Identities any less contributive or supportive of the power of race, heteronormativity, white supremacy, or colonialism in the United States.

Second, I would like to bring a focus back onto the role of whiteness in millennial mixed race identity. Ahmed argues, whiteness is both proximate to and something uninhabitable for mixed race bodies. First of all, I have argued elsewhere in this dissertation that racial mixture is not always a mixture with whiteness and that there are racial mixtures of minority-minority identifications. Also, I want to clarify that bodies can be perceived of as mixed race but cannot be understood as essentially mixed race. I would like to rephrase Ahmed's important conclusion: whiteness is both proximate and uninhabitable for millennial mixed race identity. What I mean here is not that people who identify as mixed race have access to whiteness or white space (although this is true in many ways). What I mean is that Millennial Mixed Race Identity (more generally) has access to whiteness in ways that other racial identities do not. We need to consider the ways in which Millennial Mixed Race Identities approximate whiteness,



which might be slightly different from my previous discussion in the second chapter about how individuals desire *honorary whiteness*.

What I mean here is that Millennial Mixed Race Identities have thus far attempted to resolve the affective residues caused in moments of failed recognition. We can also understand this desire for affective resolution as Millennial Mixed Race Identity's attempt to become what Ahmed calls "habitual."<sup>408</sup> Ahmed articulates the way in which whiteness is "habitual" because it "goes unnoticed" in moments of encounter; whiteness (or white identity) is simply accepted.<sup>409</sup> What I want to suggest is that in some ways, Millennial Mixed Race Identities are fighting for this habituality; these identities (and the individuals who want them) want their mixed raceness to go unnoticed and become something that does not affect their encounters in everyday life. However, this habituality is precisely what approximates whiteness and reproduces the power of whiteness in our society. In order to avoid further complicity in the power of whiteness, Millennial Mixed Race Identities should look to the ways in which this identity is not habitual; the failures of recognition are precisely the points at which Millennial Mixed Race Identity avoids its proximity to the status of whiteness and, thus, perhaps, complicity in the power of whiteness.

In 2018, it has been almost a decade since I began this undertaking to think through Millennial Mixed Race Identity and my own racial identification. In the beginning of this dissertation, I laid out the identification I was given by my interracial parents during my childhood made visible on the license plate of my mother's minivan. Everywhere we went, everywhere we arrived, every turn, every path was marked by that license plate and the identity it

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<sup>408</sup> Ahmed (2006) 132.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid.

declared. As I move further away in time from that license plate, the further I feel from that Hapa identity. Over the years, I have used many different signifiers for my racial identity. The ways in which I understand my identity has shifted as I have moved from Los Angeles to Boston to Hawaii and then back to Boston and back to L.A. In each of these spaces, I experienced different types of racial encounters that shaped the ways in which I thought about my own racial identity. And even as I sit here now, I have come to be shifted yet again: now I am the mother of two small children. Will I declare their racial identities for them and impress it into the surfaces of their bodies as Hapa was impressed upon me? I don't know that I have the answers to this question; but one thing I have learned through this endeavor is that moments of racial encounter are the most important moments to teach my children about the histories and legacies of race in the United States and their own positions and privileges within that history.

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